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TERMS IN ADVANCE

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No. 459

I CANNOT HATE HER.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH.

I cannot hate her tho' I've tried
A thousand times to do it;
And now I fear my wounded pride
Will never bring me to it.
I turned her picture to the wall,
Intending on it never
The summer sunbeams more should fall;
She said this wasn't clever.

To-night I see her play her part;
Such memories will linger;
And fickle woman's empty heart
I balance on my finger.
I've learned a bitter lesson from
The false in beauty's bosom;
And from the vanished meadows come
The scent of clover blossom.

Why, bless me! here's a look of hair
In this old, dusty letter;
A faded gentian, too, I swear!
A broken, useless letter.
What is the matter with my eyes?
I wipe them, still they're misty;
I smell the blooms of paradise;
That fringe life's saddest vista.

Although she never thinks of me,
I understand, *sub rosa*,
She keeps a *carte de visite*,
Now this is *inter nos*—a
Picture of a certain chap,
Who at my window lingers,
And takes a gaiter from his lap,
To twine around his fingers!

This letter—last one sent by her—
(May Heaven bless the writer!)
I offer to a fresh cigar.
It makes a brilliant "lighter!"
I watch the smoke wreaths as they curl
Above me to the ceiling;
I know the fickle-hearted girl
Would say I have no "feeling."

Ah! let it pass! I put away
These bitter thoughts of sorrow;
The flowers that I pluck to-day
Will wither'd be to-morrow.
Was that a footstep on the stair?
Yes, but not hers—that's certain!
Of snowy hands a precious pair
Steal up and—Drop the curtain!

Merle, the Mutineer;

OR,

THE BRAND OF THE RED ANCHOR.

A Romance of Sunny Lands and Blue Waters.

BY COLONEL PRENTISS INGRAHAM,

AUTHOR OF "WITHOUT A HEART," "THE SURF ANGEL," "THE COUSINS OF HISTORY," "THE FLYING YANKEE," "THE CRE-TAN BOY," "THE PIRATE PRINCE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RIVALS.

SEVERAL weeks after the arrival of Lance Grenville, as he was generally called by his intimates, Helen Brainard sat in her own room alone, and in deep and painful meditation, for she had confessed to her own heart, that she loved the brother of the man to whom she was engaged.

Since his return home, Lance had settled down to a quiet plantation life, and resumed the charge of the Grenville estates. He seemed no longer the restless wanderer, and his mother believed, now, that she would keep him ever near her while she lived.

As she sat thus in her room, in deep thought, Helen reviewed her meetings with Lance since his coming, and she felt that her love for him was returned, though no word of his had ever given her cause to feel that he cared for her, other than as the intended bride of his brother; still she read his heart, as often a woman can, when she is the one adored.

Fretted at the mistake she had made, in confessing her love for Arthur, with an impatient gesture Helen Brainard arose, and leaving her room, went out for a walk in the lonely grounds, for she needed action to keep off her painful reveries.

Mechanically she sought the path leading to the rustic arbor on the cliff, and threw herself down in a wicker chair, to gaze out over the sea.

"A rosebud for your thoughts, Miss Helen." The maiden started at the voice, and beheld before her a young man, elegantly dressed, and with a face that would have been very handsome, had it not been marred by dissipation and recklessness.

In his hand he held a red rosebud, which he offered her in payment for the thoughts he had asked to know.

Before coming to her present home, Helen had met in New Orleans Rosal Abercrombie, who then stood before her.

He had come of good family, but at the death of his father, some years before, he had inherited a large estate, which his wild extravagances soon swamped in debt, and from him Commodore Brainard had purchased the elegant home in which he then lived.

With no mother's influence to guide his early years, for Mrs. Abercrombie had died when her boy was an infant, and reared by his father, a man wholly governed by his son, it was no wonder that Rosal became wild, recklessly extravagant, and willful, and threw away his inheritance without thought of the future.

When all was nearly gone, and he was forced to sell his plantation home to pay his debts, Rosal Abercrombie met Helen Brainard, and from the first meeting loved her, and swore she should become his wife.

Admiring him much, the maiden had at first seemed to favor his suit; but, after her father had purchased of the dissolute youth his home, and she had met Arthur Grenville, she no longer cared for Rosal, who, to do him justice, had given up his wild life, and upon the wreck of his fortune was living quietly in the village near his former abode.

Though he knew that the maiden was the promised wife of Arthur Grenville, Rosal Aber-



"Ha! ha! ha! Helen Brainard, two can play at the game of revenge, as you shall know."

crombie did not despair of yet winning her, and was wont to often ride over to Landhaven, as the commodore had named his place, to see the object of his love.

"My thoughts were not of interest to you, Mr. Abercrombie; but be seated; I am glad you have come to drive them away, for they were not of the pleasantest," said Helen, quietly.

"Would that I could ever drive from you that which was unpleasant to you, Helen," remarked the young man, earnestly.

"Mr. Abercrombie, is this generous, is it honorable in you, when you know I am engaged to another?"

"Bah! engaged to one man and loving another," sneered the young profligate.

"What mean you, sir? If you intend to insult me, my father shall know of your impertinence," and Helen arose to her feet, an angry flush upon her cheeks.

"Helen Brainard, sit down! I wish to talk with you. Nay, do not exhibit anger, for though becoming in a great degree, it is yet out of place with one who loves you as I do, and who would make you his wife."

"So you have often said, and as often have received my answer: I do not love you, Mr. Abercrombie."

"Still I would have you marry me, Helen."

"Yes, you would use me as a stepping-stone, to get back your old home, which you threw away by extravagance."

The man's brow darkened; but he answered, calmly.

"No, I would marry you because I love you; had I known you years ago I would not now be what I am."

"I love you, Helen, with all my soul, and would have you my wife, even though I believed you loved another."

"Your love is hopeless, Rosal," protested Helen, with some kindness in her tone; and then she added:

"I could not commit such a sin as to marry one man and love another."

"Then I suppose you will break your engagement with Arthur Grenville?"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Simply that you love Lance Grenville, though engaged to Arthur."

"Again you insult me, sir, and upon my own land."

"If the truth offends, so be it; I tell you that which you dare not deny, and I would show you a way out of your present difficulty."

"I have read your secret, Helen Brainard, and I have read his secret love for you, and trouble hangs like a suspended knife above your head."

"Be warned, Helen, and cause no trouble between those two brothers; they are noble fellows, yet they are high-strung and passionate, and the secret will leak out, and the green-eyed monster, jealousy, may make one or the other of them a Cain."

"See, I offer myself to save you from doing that which may be a great crime."

"I offer you my whole love. I am not yet a beggar, for I have enough to live on, and for you I will work with every energy I possess. Farewell! In one week I will come for my answer."

The man turned, walked toward the mansion, and a moment after Helen saw him dash away on horseback, and a deep sigh escaped her lips.

"Poor Helen!"

The maiden started with a cry of alarm, and turned quickly.

Before her stood the tall, elegant form of Lance Grenville.

He was in hunting costume, buck-skin suit, top-boots and slouch hat, and stood leaning upon the muzzle of his rifle.

The arbor was divided into three compartments—a center one, open seaward and landward, and here Helen had been seated when joined by Rosal Abercrombie.

Upon either side of this open hall were two small rooms—one used as a smoking and card-room, the other as a reading retreat for warm days.

In the doorway of the latter now stood Lance Grenville, his dark face stern and ashen, and his somber eyes still more sorrowful.

"Pardon me, Helen, for having been an eavesdropper—I was strolling along the beach, shooting water-fowl, became fatigued and came here to rest, expecting to disturb no one."

"I dropped off to sleep, lulled by the wash of the waves, and your voices in conversation awakened me, and I would have made my presence known had I not heard that which caused me to remain quiet, I cared not that Rosal Abercrombie should know I was present. Am I pardoned for eavesdropping?"

"Yes; but oh! what have you not heard?" groaned the unhappy girl.

"I have heard that which would make me extremely happy, were my joy not purchased with my brother's misery."

"Did Rosal Abercrombie speak the truth, Helen, when he said you cared for me more than for Arthur?"

"He did."

"You confess it?"

"With humiliation, yes."

"It is not humiliating to confess one's love, Helen, for I tell you that I love you with my whole heart, now that the secret is no longer my own."

Helen gave a half-cry, as if of joy, of sorrow, and alarm mingled.

Before her stood the noble man, who had just confessed his love for her.

But he drew not nearer to her; his rifle he had leaned against the door, and his arms were folded upon his broad breast.

"Helen Brainard, farewell forever."

Quickly the strong man turned, and walked away down the cliff path, and, her heart wrung with anguish, Helen Brainard threw herself up on the floor, and leaning upon the wicker chair buried her face in her hands.

CHAPTER VIII.

CAIN OCCURRED.

SOBBING bitterly, Helen Brainard remained some time in her perfect abandon of grief.

Then she started, for a light touch fell upon her shoulder.

"Ah, Lance," she burst forth, "I knew that you would not leave me thus."

"It is not Lance, Helen."

With a bound, like an enraged lioness, Helen Brainard was upon her feet.

Before her stood Arthur Grenville!

"You! you have heard my words, sir?" she said, savagely.

"I behold you here in great grief, Helen. Your father told me I would find you here, and I heard you speak the name of my brother in strange tones. His rifle stands there, and I saw him going up the beach, a moment since."

"What does it all mean, Helen?"

The maiden made no reply, and after a moment Arthur Grenville continued:

"I will speak for you, Helen, and not in anger will I say a word."

"You remember when we stood together here, and awaited the coming of my brother?"

"Yes," broke from the white lips.

"Then I told you, half in earnest, for I seemed to feel a presentiment of coming evil, not to fall in love with Lance."

"Still I tell you, Helen, that I have lately seen that such has been the case!"

"Yes, Helen, you love my brother, and not me."

Still the maiden uttered no word, and the man went on:

"I grieve over this afternoon to break my engagement with you, and to say good-by."

"No, no, no, do not leave me, Arthur!" groaned the unhappy girl.

"Yes, I intended to rejoin my ship at once, and be to be seen, cruising in the southern waters after buccaners, and never to return, until you were the wife of Lance Grenville, for I know how well you two love each other."

after the death of Colonel Darrington by his hand, and the suicide of poor Lucile.

"Mother?"

"Well, Launcelot?" and Mrs. Grenville was almost frightened at the tone of her son's voice.

"It is useless trying; I cannot remain here; I will leave home once more."

"Not soon, I trust, Launcelot?" said the mother, her heart sinking with dread.

"Yes, to-morrow; ay, to-night—within the hour," he announced, earnestly.

"And whither would you go, my son?"

"Anywhere, everywhere! back to Mexico, and again take command of a cruiser."

"Does not David sail to-night for New Orleans with marketing?"

"Yes, but—"

"Then I shall go with him; I will at once pack my trunk, so please send word not to let the lugger sail without me."

"But you will miss seeing Arthur?" said Mrs. Grenville, trying by some ruse to detain him if she could.

"He went over to Landhaven, I suppose?"

"Yes, Lance."

"Then he will not return until late; bid him good-by for me," and the unhappy man left the tea-room.

In an hour's time he returned, dressed for traveling, and accompanied by a negro servant bearing his trunk.

Sorrowing for her son, whom she believed was flying from the cruel memories that haunted him when at home, Mrs. Grenville bade him farewell with many tears, and entreaties not to remain long away from her.

"I am getting old fast, Lance; see, my hair is white now, and ere long you will have no mother."

"The sorrows I have had, have left their impress here," and she laid her hand upon her heart.

"If you remain away long, my son, you will find no welcome from me upon your return, for I will be sleeping yonder," and she pointed to a grove of trees at the other end of the garden, where, for generations, the Grenvilles had been laid in their last resting-place.

"If you die, mother, I shall never return home; you are the only anchor that I have to hold me here," and he drew his mother toward him, imprinted a kiss upon the silver hair and was gone.

With quick, heavy step he walked down toward the landing, a few hundred yards distant, followed by the servant bearing his trunks.

At a small pier lay a lugger, a plantation trading-boat, the sails up, and the negro crew, of three men, awaiting his coming.

"Well, Dave, I am to be your passenger to New Orleans."

"So missis sent word, massa, an' I has had the cabin fixt up as nice as possible," said the black skipper, politely, then he added: "Ise sorry to see you goin' away so soon, sah."

"I must go, Dave; but I will remain on deck, on a blanket, if I care to sleep, for the night is beautiful to go into the cabin," and Lance Grenville glanced over the moonlit waters, for a full moon rode in the cloudless heavens.

"Are you ready now, Dave?"

"Yes, sah, if you is, massa."

"Then cast off, for I am most anxious to be away," impatiently said Lance Grenville, and the lugger was slowly swung round to catch the breeze.

"Hold on there with that craft! put back to the wharf, or I will fire on you!"

The words were loud and determined, and issued from the lips of a horseman, who dashed down to the pier, followed by a score of companions, also mounted.

"Put back, Dave; you have not been stealing, I hope," said Lance Grenville, calmly.

"No, sah; but dat am de new sheriff, sah, sartin'."

In another moment the lugger was again alongside the pier, and Lance Grenville sprang ashore, and asked, sternly:

"Of what has my servant been guilty, gentlemen, that you come after him, mounted and armed?"

"It is not your servant we are after, Captain Grenville, but yourself," answered sheriff Winston, laying his hand upon the arm of the young man.

"Indeed! of what am I accused?" sneeringly demanded Lance Grenville.

"You are guilty of as base a crime as—"

The man said no more, for a blow, fair in the face, laid him his length upon the ground.

"Hold! Lance Grenville, you cannot escape," and a dozen pistols were leveled upon him.

"I seek not to escape; I but punished one who said I was guilty of a base crime; of what am I accused?"

He turned haughtily upon those who confronted him.

Then one dismounted and stepped toward him; it was Rosal Abercrombie.

"Lance, my poor friend, the charge against you is a severe one, and I trust it can be proven false."

"Name it, sir."

"Murder! Who have I murdered?" and Lance spoke half-earnestly, half-laughingly.

"Your brother, Arthur."

As the last name issued from the lips of Rosal Abercrombie, the hand of Launcelot Grenville was upon his throat, and he was hurled back with a force that nearly stunned him.

"Liar! wretch! you dare make that charge against me!"

"It is a severe charge, Captain Grenville, and it remains with you to prove it untrue," said an old planter, coming forward.

"Arthur, my brother Arthur dead?"

"He is, sir."

"Who killed him?"

"I? why should I kill poor Arthur?"

"Captain Grenville," and the sheriff approached, cautiously: "Captain Grenville, I am very sorry, sir, but it is my duty, sir, to arrest you upon the charge of murder, and I must iron you, as already we know how violent you can be."

The head of the proud man dropped on his breast, and a deep groan broke from his lips, as he stood a moment in silence.

Then he said, calmly, facing his accusers, and holding his wrists together:

"Do your duty, sir."

The manacles were clasped upon his wrists, and the party set off for the manor.

As they ascended the broad steps of the piazza another deep sorrow fell upon the prisoner—a sorrow almost greater than he could bear.

At the door a servant met him, and from his lips broke the words:

"Massa Lance, your poor mother am dead."

"Dead! my mother dead, too?"

He spoke like one in his sleep.

"Yes, sah; when de gemmans comed an' tole her how you had kill Massa Art'ur, den she lay down on de sofa an' die," said the old negro, the factotum of the Grenville manor, when his young masters were little boys.

With a groan from his inmost heart, Laurence Grenville sunk down in a chair, and buried his face in his manacled hands.

CHAPTER IX.

A STRANGE COMPACT.

"I HAVE come for my answer, Helen."

Helen Brainerd sat alone in the sea-view arbor on the cliff, and her eyes were looking fixedly out over the sunlit waters of the Gulf, though they apparently saw nothing, as she seemed lost in bitter thought.

Her face was blanched, her eyes deep-sunken, and her haggard looks proved that she had suffered, in the week that had passed, since she last sat in that arbor, and was left there in a deep faint by Arthur Grenville.

Like a lightning stroke, the news had come upon her, that Arthur Grenville was dead, and that his brother was his murderer!

For days she had lain in a kind of semi-stupor, conscious, yet uttering no word; but at last she had left her room, and, to her father's delight, had joined him at breakfast; very morning, a week from the day of the murder.

As though determined to shut out the past, she had gone about her duties with a quiet manner, for she was her father's housekeeper, and then she sat down to the piano and idly ran her fingers over the keys; but the air she started, drifted off into a dirge, and seizing her unfinished novel, she walked out toward the arbor.

But not to read, for bitter memories thronged upon her, and her face soon became as cold as marble; but in her eyes dwelt a strange light.

"I have come for my answer, Helen."

The maiden did not start; she knew who addressed her, and she said, quietly:

"I am glad you have come, Mr. Abercrombie; I wish to talk with you."

A bright look crossed the man's face, and entering the arbor he seated himself upon a settee.

"From my heart I pity you, Helen."

"Do you?" was the calm reply.

"Indeed I do; it came so soon, so unexpectedly upon you."

"You are without a rival now?"

It was half-sarcastic, half a question, and there was a sneer in her tone.

"Yes; one dead, and one in prison and as well as doomed—this is why I came to beg you to let me have the right to comfort you in your sorrow."

"The world need not know; only give me the promise that you will become my wife. I told you I would return in one week, and though I knew your sorrow was overwhelming, I have come."

The man pleaded earnestly, and his voice trembled.

After a silence of a moment, Helen said:

"I am glad you have come, for I would learn from you all about this cruel murder."

"From me? Why did not your father tell you all?" asked Rosal, in surprise.

"He told me that Arthur Grenville had fallen by the hand of his brother; that was all I then cared to know. Now I will hear all from you."

"I will make known all that I can tell of the sad affair, Helen, in which, unfortunately, I was forced to take a too conspicuous part."

"You!" and the eyes turned earnestly upon his face.

"Yes; the word first came to me of the murder."

"I am listening," as Rosal Abercrombie paused.

"Well, you know I left you here, the other afternoon, and rode down to the beach to the cabin of old Beal, the fisherman, intending to engage him and his craft for a day's sport."

"I did not find Beal at home, and on returning met him, just after dark, a mile from here, at the White Cliff, and he held in his hand a coat dark object, which he informed me was a coat of arms, and by the bright moonlight recognized it as the coat worn by Arthur Grenville, and, from Beal, I learned that a terrible tragedy had taken place."

"He was off shore fishing in his small boat, and at sunset saw a horseman ride out upon the cliff, and he recognized Arthur Grenville, who seemed to be gaining seaward, as though in search of a sail."

"A moment, he said, that Arthur remained there, and then he saw him fall from his horse, and the report of a rifle reached his ears."

"He was so surprised at what he beheld that he remained motionless, and then, by the light of the rising moon, he saw a tall form run out upon the cliff, from the pine thicket, and bend over the body of Arthur Grenville."

"A moment he remained thus, and then he arose, bearing the body in his arms, and hurried it from the cliff into the sea."

"For awhile he stood after the deed, and then walked rapidly back to the pine thicket, and Beal next beheld him dash away upon a white horse."

"Then the fisherman remained inactive no longer, and hastily rode seaward, and searched for the body, but without success, and going upon the cliff he found the coat, hat and boots of Arthur Grenville, for such I recognized them to be."

"From his description of the murderer, 'a very tall man, riding a white horse,' I felt that it must be Lance Grenville, for you know I had dreaded trouble."

"Yes, your descriptions were quickly realized. What did you then do, Rosal?"

"There was a strange calmness in the manner and tone of the woman, and Rosal Abercrombie doubted if she had loved Arthur Grenville as well as he had believed, or his brother at all."

"I felt it my duty to cause the arrest of Lance Grenville, and I sought the sheriff, Mr. Beal, went after several of the planters, and we met at the residence of the Grenvilles, and, to add to our suspicions, learned that Lance had just left home for an indefinite period, going by the market lugger to New Orleans."

"While several of the party remained at the mansion, to acquaint the poor mother with the sad tidings, we dashed down to the pier, and captured the murderer, but not until he had knocked the sheriff down, and roughly handled me."

"Poor Mrs. Grenville! How terrible must have been her sorrow!"

"Her sorrows were soon at an end; she died from the shock, as you know she had heart-disease."

Helen Brainerd started, and her form trembled violently, for she had dearly loved the noble old lady to whose son she had been betrothed.

After a long silence, which Rosal Abercrombie would not interrupt, Helen asked:

"And Laurence Grenville is in prison now?"

"Yes, he is in the village jail, doubly ironed."

"When will he be tried?"

"In two weeks."

"There is no proof that Lance Grenville is the murderer?"

"Yes, he was seen by Beal, and—"

"How far off was Beal?"

"Well, say two hundred yards from the shore."

"Did he say that it was Lance Grenville who did the deed?"

"What a Yankee you are for questions, Helen! He said it was a very large man, and that he rode away on a white horse, after throwing the body into the sea."

"The body was never found, was it?"

"No; it drifted out with the tide, and the

beach, for miles, has been searched in vain for it."

"The description of the murderer answers to Lance Grenville, certainly; still it may not have been, and a court will ask many questions before he is condemned on that evidence."

"You need offer no excuse for the man you love, Helen, for—"

"Silence, sir! I tell you that better evidence must be found to hang Lance Grenville, and, Rosal Abercrombie, you must find it!"

"Great God!"

The man was on his feet in an instant; but the maiden was perfectly serene, a strange smile upon her lips, a stranger look in her eyes.

"In God's name what do you mean, Helen Brainerd?"

"Just what I say, sir; you must find evidence that will hang Lance Grenville for the murder of his brother Arthur."

"I thought you loved Lance Grenville!" gasped the man, inquiringly.

"I thought so, too; it was a fascination, an infatuation."

"And Arthur Grenville?"

"Was my first, last and only love."

The maiden spoke with painful earnestness, and looked the man before her squarely in the face.

"You have just found this out?"

"Yes, when he is dead, and his brother is his murderer."

"And you wish now to have Lance Grenville—"

"Hanged!"

The eyes fairly blazed now, and the lips were bloodless; the man was fairly frightened.

"Rosal Abercrombie, I hate Lance Grenville as fervently as I loved his brother, and I am revengeful, and I must die, and you must supply the evidence necessary to condemn him."

"I will show you. Go into that arbor, look behind the door, and then tell me what you discover."

The man quietly obeyed, and returning, said in a whisper:

"It is Lance Grenville's rifle."

"Yes; he left it here one week ago to-day—can it not be made use of?"

"How?"

"It is not," said Rosal, after an examination.

"It was fired last a week ago, then; cannot an expert tell by examination if a firearm has just been discharged, or—"

"Yes, I understand; tell me your plan," said the man, an evil look creeping into his eyes.

"If you found the rifle near the White Cliffs—hidden in the fine straw, and—"

"Helen Brainerd, you are a very devil for plotting! This evidence will be sufficient to hang him."

"It may, and it may not; there must be more."

"How and when can I get it?"

"See the prosecuting attorney, and tell him that, in my grief, I saw to it that my testimony would hang Lance Grenville, if I gave it."

"Your testimony?"

"Yes; one week ago Lance Grenville stood where you do now, and said to me that which I will make known before a court, if I am called as a witness."

"You shall be there; but your revenge against Lance is fearful."

"I hate as I love—with my whole soul; now take the rifle and go."

"And my reward—for I do this for you alone, Helen."

"The day that Lance Grenville is sentenced to be hanged, I will pledge myself to become your wife, upon any day after one year from Arthur Grenville's death that you will name."

"By Heaven! do you mean it?" and a look of triumph shot into the eyes of the man.

"Do, and with me you will get back this, your old home, and the bones of your ancestors, which you sold to my father."

The sneer in the words caused Rosal Abercrombie to turn deadly pale; but he said, as calmly as he could:

"You will love me then, Helen?"

"No; that is not in my compact with you—I loved Arthur Grenville living, and I love his memory now; I will hate you, but I will be your wife."

"Enough; I am content with my compact. I will indeed be envied, for the world will only see that my bride is in the image of an angel, and not behold that she has the heart of a devil."

"True, but you will know me as I am—as I know you, Rosal Abercrombie. Good-evening, sir," and the revenge-crazed woman swept haughtily from the arbor, while Rosal Abercrombie took up the tell-tale rifle, muttering to himself:

"Ay, my beauty, I will be revenged on you, too, for casting me aside for Arthur Grenville. Yes, I will gain my beautiful wife, and her golden dowry, and once again have back the home of my forefathers."

"Ha! ha! ha!" Helen Brainerd, too, can play at the game of revenge, as you shall know.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 457.)

The End of "Old Bush."

BY EDWARD WILKETT.

ONE of the noted desperadoes who during several years infested the Ozark range of mountains in South-west Missouri, was known as "Old Bush."

Before he developed into a horse-thief and outlaw in general, he had been in common with many other characters of the same class, a guerrilla, during the great civil war, at the close of which he had found himself unable to settle to peaceful pursuits, and had devoted his life to depredations upon his fellow-men. His specialty was horse-stealing, but he did not object to an occasional highway robbery, and his exploits were not unaccompanied by such homicides as even he was unable to justify upon the plea of self-defense. He probably possessed a name that was given to him in baptism—supposing him to ever have been baptized; but it had been forgotten by all except himself, and he was known to his fellow-outlaws and to the officers of justice only as "Old Bush."

In the course of his career as a guerrilla, he had been guilty of many cruel and bloody deeds, one of the worst of which was the killing of a Union soldier named Peters, whom he had found at his home, recovering from a severe wound, and had slaughtered him in cold blood. The murdered Unionist had left a brother, many years younger than himself, who, as he progressed from boyhood toward manhood, warmly cherished the memory of his dead brother, and was determined to be revenged upon his assassin for his untimely taking off.

At the age of sixteen Frank Peters was a proficient in the sport of hunting, and was well-versed in the arts of woodcraft. He was an excellent shot, and justly prided himself upon the skill with which he used his squirrel rifle. He ranged extensively through the hills and forests of that sparsely settled region, being well acquainted with the intricacies of the rugged Ozark ranges. In the course of his hunting rambles he believed that he had hit upon the hiding-place of the notorious outlaw, "Old Bush," who had a cabin in a valley clearing, which he seldom visited, but whose favorite haunt was believed to be located in some undiscovered or unvisited portion of Blue Hill, one of the most northerly peaks of the range.

Frank Peters of course knew that the authorities of that section of country were anxious to get the outlaw into their hands, and his own feeling toward "Old Bush" was one of mortal hatred. It was natural for him to believe that he could serve the ends of justice, and at the same time gratify his own longing for vengeance, by leading the authorities to the supposed hiding-place of the outlaw. With this view he put himself in communication with the sheriff of his county, and was directed to first verify his discovery, and then to ascertain the easiest way

of approach to the cavern which he believed to be the habitation of the outlaw.

The boy set out to accomplish this object, armed, as usual, with his squirrel rifle. He ascended Blue Hill, reconnoitered the cavern which he had previously discovered, and entered it when he had satisfied himself that there was nobody within. He found abundant evidence of occupation, including some articles which left him in no doubt of the recent presence of "Old Bush." Then he set himself to discover an entrance to the cavern, and in this effort he was also successful, coming upon a bridge-path which had evidently been used by the outlaw for the purpose of taking stolen horses up and down the hill.

Having settled these points to his satisfaction, and being fatigued by his exertions, Frank Peters sat down to rest on a ledge which overhung a wild ravine, and which was backed by a steep acclivity. As he rested there, he sunk into a doze, from which he was rudely aroused by the pressure of a heavy hand and the sound of a coarse voice. Looking up, he saw "Old Bush" standing before him.

There was no mistaking the man. His great size, his outlandish attire, his grizzled red hair and beard, and the look of truculent determination on his face, could belong to none but "Old Bush."

Escape or resistance was hopeless. The boy the giant, who had already possessed himself of the squirrel rifle, and who also carried a superior weapon of his own. There was, besides, a strange expression upon the man's face, which caused Frank to hope that he might possibly be induced to mercy.

"Taint no use, young one," said the outlaw, as the strange expression spread out into a grin. "Reckon you know me, don't you?"

Frank nodded.

"I know 'Old Bush,' the man you are after. How do I know that you are after me? Why, I have my friends down yonder, and I know everything that's goin' on. Couldn't carry on business without friends. I know that you had to slip about with your rifle, and I know that you had to get it out of me. So I watched for you. You came to hunt me down, and you have caught me; or I have caught you, which ain't quite the same thing, is it, but—"

As Frank could interpose no plea to this indictment, he discreetly held his tongue.

"You are Frank Peters," continued the outlaw. "You are the brother of Ben Peters, the man who shot at me in the war, and I don't blame you for wantin' to get even with me, but I must allow it, you know. By rights I ought to chuck you over that into the sink, but I don't want to do it. I have been sorry that I killed your brother, and I want to clear your name, if you would choose to live, wouldn't you?"

Frank nodded again.

"Of course you would, and I mean to give you the chance. But I can't let you go. That would be safe on one side, and I would make a splendid home for you, but I must allow it, you know. By rights I ought to chuck you over that into the sink, but I don't want to do it. I have been sorry that I killed your brother, and I want to clear your name, if you would choose to live, wouldn't you?"

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Frank nodded again.

"Of course you would, and I mean

THE EVENING OF THE YEAR.

BY WILLIAM TENNYSON HEATON.

'Tis autumn time, and just below,
Those wreaths of thin blue smoke
From hamlet-house are rising slow,
And golden tapers cross the dusk.
In silence white the burial ground
In yonder quiet valley lies,
And weeping willows grow around
Where lathered-headstones rise.

The friends that trod those winding lanes
In the years forever dead
Are resting there where silence reigns—
While angels guard each bed.
Their faces though again I see
Through the years that lie between,
As the shadows gather o'er the lea,
Mid the graves and evergreen.

Childhood's friends, the maiden fair,
Who loved me so well, long ago,
Come back to me, and thro' the still air
Whisper echoes soft and low.
I hear a voice, a long-loved voice,
Speaking sweetly to my heart—
"Oh! weary heart, be calm! rejoice!
We'll meet on heaven's fair plain!"

Maud's Ambition.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"KEITH LENNOX! Marty Keith Lennox—Ada, are you crazy? I'd as soon think of cutting off my right arm as marrying Keith Lennox, or any other man who is not able to give me a better place to live in than this."

Maud Lawrence tossed her pretty golden-haired head, and looked at her indignant contempt at her sister Ada's mention of Keith Lennox's name.

"I am afraid you expect so much more than you will ever get from him. We are poor, obscure people, Maud, and it would be very unreasonable if a Prince Charming should come along and select either of us for his consort. And besides, Keith is a good fellow, Maud, and earning a salary equal to papa's. If all of us can live on twelve hundred a year, and such terrible doctor's bills for mamma, I am sure two healthy, strong young people ought to live on the same sum very luxuriously and save money in the bargain."

Ada's tone was earnest and gentle, and Maud felt obliged to listen, although there was a little sarcastic smile on her red lips.

"Twelve hundred a year! Ada, you don't seem to understand that I never, never will be satisfied unless I make a grand match. I ought to do it, Ada, for although, as you say, we are poor and obscure, I am pretty; I only speak of my appearance as so much stock in trade; I have a fair education; you have often told me I had 'style' enough to wear the strawberry leaves; and I am positive I would enjoy the position of a wealthy man's wife, and by that I mean, a position that commands houses and lands, horses and carriages, servants in livery and powder, a villa at the sea-shore, one in the mountains, a—"

Ada interrupted her with a little exclamation of almost concern.

"Child, how you are running on! You surely know how worse than folly it is for you to be so much in the clouds of Espagne; why, Maud, a princess could hardly have more than you want."

Maud laughed and flushed, looking ravishingly sweet and piquant with her blue eyes all aglow, her mouth dimpled, and her cheeks glowing.

"Oh, but you interrupted me before I said all I want—and mean to have, too! I know there are diamonds, and grand costumes and European tours waiting for me, some time, somewhere, Maud, and when you deliberately advise me to marry Keith Lennox—I! Well, the insanity of the idea is appalling."

Ada opened her sewing-machine with a little sigh.

"Notwithstanding everything, I suppose your blue organdie must be finished in time for the new party-to-morrow. And poor Keith will be there."

An impatient frown puckered up Maud's fair forehead.

"And what if he is? So will Mr. Holland, and Jennie Gatzmer's good-looking brother, and Phil Barry and—oh, dozens of young men. Only I don't know why you need say 'poor Keith'; he has twelve hundred a year, you know."

Her blue eyes sparkled saucily, but Ada, winning a bobbin did not see it, and answered gravely enough.

"I was not speaking of him financially. I am sorry for him, because he worships you, and you intend to throw him over."

Maud laughed deliciously—music that itself was a rare charm.

"Why don't you take him, Ada! You two suit each other remarkably well—and leave me to arrange my own affairs. Ada—" and the sweet voice suddenly dropped its gay, bantering tone, and was so seriously grave and resolute that Ada looked instantly up—"Ada, if Mr. Pemberton asks me, I shall accept him."

"Mr. Pemberton! Mr. Pemberton! Maud, my darling, don't say such a horrible thing again, even in jest! You sicken me, you frighten me—that wicked old man—oh, Maud, surely, surely you are only teasing me?"

For there was a resolute tone on Maud's grave face that emphasized her words, several words. "Is he a wicked old man? Oh, of course he is not young—as Keith Lennox—but you will not deny that he is—oh! awfully rich—a 'Bonzan king' they call him, don't they? Papa says he's worth at least five million dollars."

The blue eyes were flashing and glowing on Ada's horrified face.

"Maud! What matter a thousand million if you must have it at such a—such a horrible sacrifice! He is so vulgar, so—so loud—so flashy, so old—why, his youngest child is nearly as old as you, Maud, and his wife hasn't been dead a year yet!"

Maud laughed again—that silvery little melody that had made Rufus Pemberton once boast before a bar-room full of admiring, envious comrades, that "if money could buy that laugh and the girl who run it, he'd be the purchaser."

"Well, there—there's no more to be said about it. Put the Torcheon lace on those ruffles, dear, and I'll look sweet! I do hope to-morrow I'll be a fair day, don't you?"

Then she went off to her room on some pretext or other, and Ada sat and sewed and grieved, and tried to hope that after all Maud would never let her mercenary ambition ruin her happiness.

Mr. Rufus Pemberton sat in his magnificent library that snowy, blustering morning, a look of perplexed annoyance on his coarse face as he read over and over again a letter he had just finished writing, in the construction of which he had wasted an hour, possibly, and which yet seemed unsatisfactory.

And the letter was to Maud Lawrence, to whom he had been engaged to be married since the day of the famous picnic, several months before, when Maud had been so ravishingly beautiful in her pale-blue organdie, with her golden curls flying, her pink cheeks flushing and dimpling, her exquisite laugh ringing silvery.

The letter was to Maud Lawrence, who had been living in a seventh heaven of feverish delight and exultation that her wildest dreams were to be realized—until these last few weeks when it seemed as if fate herself was bound to be avenged for the outrage Maud was so deliberately perpetrating on her own heart and finer nature.

For terrible misfortune had come to Maud Lawrence; terrible sickness that had spent all its power of fury on her, wrecking her for life, wasting her wonderful beauty, and dooming her to speak in hoarse, whispering tones; then, as if her evil genius could not be sufficiently appeased by such pitiful sacrifices, her disease settled in her hip and Maud was lamed for life!

It was when she was recovering her physical strength—maimed and marred for all time though she was—that Rufus Pemberton made up his coarse, sensual mind to get off his bargain with the girl whose beauty and grace he had thought a good exchange for his money.

And the letter that bothered him was the letter to the girl he had asked to marry him, telling her, in plain, clumsy terms, that he no longer wanted her.

And it went into Maud's cheerful little invalid bedroom, where there was sunshine, and where there were flowers and a bird and a kitten, and new novels, and a bit of gay zephyr work—it went in into the brightness and comfort, like a cruel sword thrust into quivering flesh, hurting and stinging Maud's sensitive pride, and making her desperate in her shame and rage, and making Ada send up praises of thanksgiving even when she counted the price.

After that came the darkest days Maud Lawrence had ever known. More sickness and trouble followed, and death came and left the two girls alone and entirely unprovided for. They were obliged to go away from the pleasant little home that never before had seemed so pleasant to poor Maud; and the actual from day-to-day-fight with the world began; and Maud in her helplessness and misery had to sit by and let brave-hearted, chery-souled Ada earn the bread and cheese for them to eat.

It was during those days that the discipline of adversity worked its effect on Maud's subdued spirit, and she saw what a grand man Keith Lennox was—what a chance who had stood by them in all their circumstances, who had been Ada's counselor, comforter, friend; and who now, Maud saw with a bitterness of pain she never dreamed could come to her through Keith Lennox—she saw would one day be still near and strong.

For Ada's eyes would brighten when he came, invariably asking for her; and when, through the day Maud would speak of him, Ada would flush and look conscious, and then Maud would feel the bitter pain, and tell herself her sense and better self had been awakened only in time to discover it was too late to be of avail.

It all culminated one day, when Ada went in to the quiet little room where Maud sat trying to eke out their close income, making some lace trimming for the stores.

"I want to have a little talk with you, dear, about our affairs. I suppose we—I mean Keith and I—might have waited a little longer before we told you, but Keith asked me to tell you today, and so, dear, put down your work and listen."

"Poor Maud! A look at Ada's sweet, peaceful happy face told her what was to be said, and although it was worse pain than any one could have told, Maud hushed the sorrowful sobs that were stirring in her heart before they reached her poor, quivering lips. Ada gently caressed the little white hand that lay quiet on the dainty lace-work, as she talked.

"You see, dear, Keith thought it best that we should do nothing until everything was arranged, but now—he has got the little cottage here, and now—oh, such a darling nest of a house, and Maud, it is all furnished so beautifully, and this afternoon he is to come for us in a carriage and take us out to see it. Maud, you don't begin to know what a splendid fellow Keith is!"

Maud smiled a pitiful, patient little ghost of a smile.

"I know he is, Ada, a dear, good fellow."

"And there couldn't be a better for a brother-in-law, Maud!"

Ah! It was a delicate, roundabout way to tell it, but, all the same, there went a pain like a dagger through Maud's heart. A brother-in-law! Well—yes, that was what he was, and to her—she, who had once thrown him contemptuously aside for a man who had—sickened her as she thought of it all, and compared the two, and realized her loss, she—lame, sick, voiceless! Nevertheless it was a gentle, patient face that smiled at Keith Lennox, as he stood on the little rose-bowered piazza waiting for them; very pure, lovely eyes that time or sickness never would dim, but that trouble had made more beautiful and soulful than ever, that looked up in his eager, grandly tender face as he lifted her from the carriage.

"Welcome! Come in, and make yourselves at home, because—you have told her, haven't you, Ada, that we are here for good? You told her the marriage is to take place here, this afternoon!"

Another of those agony thrills shot through her, then she smiled bravely at Keith and Ada.

"How delicious! Only, Ada, not dressed enough like a bride."

She said it, scarcely knowing what she said. Then, Ada's arms were around her neck, and Keith was holding her two hands, and he was looking down in her astonished eyes.

"But Ada is not the bride, Maud! It is you, my darling, you for whom I have been waiting so long, whom I want above all things, for whom I have made this little home—you, Maud, and the clergyman is waiting in the parlor to make you my wife! Maud!—Ada, tell her to say yes!"

No need for Ada's intercession, for the look of ineffable happiness in those deep, sweet eyes, that gleamed on, and radiated from every feature of that rare sweet face answered Keith as man never before was answered.

"I will be here, then, this evening at eight."

Philip, when he returned to the bank, pleaded illness and was excused from work. He would have made no mistake as he attempted any arithmetic that day. Going home, he shut himself up in his room, giving to his mother that convenient excuse—headache.

Meantime, at the hotel, there was considerable excitement over the death of M. Franca. The coroner's jury, of course, was called out to much put out about it; it was inconvenient for him. He would lose his prima-donna, too; for she had already sent him word that she should never sing on the stage again.

Much sympathy was felt for the young and beautiful actress who exhibited all the symptoms of profound grief.

The truth was that Kitty's nerves had, for a year and a half, been under such a constant and terrible strain, that, when this sudden, unexpected relief came—and, added to that, the cold, the fever, the pneumonia—she was, for hours, all control of herself, going from one spasm of hysteria into another, until nature was utterly exhausted and she fell into a deep and deathlike sleep.

She had awakened from the refreshing sleep, had, of course, as Teresa had comforted her, tangles of her long, silken hair and thrown about her young mistress a richly-embroidered white cashmere dressing-gown, when Mr. Armory's card came up again.

"Help me out into my sitting-room, Teresa; then, bring this in, and do you know what the doctor says? That we are not interrupted."

Philip trembled so that he could hardly stand when he found himself clasping the marble hand which Kitty held out to him.

She had done with weeping, now; done with nervous shiverings and sobs. She stood before him pale, calm and lovely as some moon-lily.

"Mr. Armory, it is kind of you to come. I did not feel that I could bear the excitement of meeting my father-to-day. I want you to tell him first that I am here, and tell him some of the things that, which it is important he should hear. You may think strange that I choose you for my messenger, but I know you are a true friend of mine. How are Miss Bayard and Mr. Fenn?—are they married?"

"Married, and very happy, I believe. The only trouble they have in the world is the anxiety they feel about you, I have been told."

He wondered to find her so tranquil, speaking in an ordinary tone.

"A great good fortune has befallen me to-day, Mr. Armory. I thank God for it! I think that the man who lies in yonder room is dead. Oh, I am free again—I can breathe once more!" stretching her round white arms up with a passionate gesture. "You are surprised! Listen! That abhorrent man, who lies there dead, never was my husband. It is true, he cheated me into a ceremony, which

"Please do not speak to me, Count Cicarini," she said to him, holding out her white arms as if to keep him away. "Yet stay! I have one request to make of you. It is—that you do not seek to punish Alberto for the crimes he did against you. He is—my husband—now."

The words dropped like icicles from her pallid lips.

The count bowed low as he answered: "For your sake, madam, for the sake of the pleasant past—I consent not to lay a straw in Alberto's way. May your life with him be happy and prosperous; I shall not disturb it."

His beautiful lips curled with scorn of a woman who could debase herself to live with that scoundrel. Kitty said the contempt, but her lips were sealed—she could only look after him with a dilating gaze of love, horror, shame, longing, desperation: Alberto was at her elbow, his fierce eyes watched her with malignant cunning, and she had to allow the count to bow again, and pass on, haughtily, biting his lips with annoyance, out of the theater. Ah! the count did not hear that low cry of despair that broke from her struggling heart when he was gone; he did not see her fall like an overtoppled statue prone upon the floor.

Teresa had much to do to get her young mistress back to her senses, and dressed for her next entrance on the stage. Happily there was quite a scene before the *prima donna* would be called. Yet, even then, Kitty would never have moved herself to the effort had she not hoped to see the count again in his box when she went out on the stage. She did not see him, however; he had left the opera house in a passion of scorn, anger, wounded feelings. Despair did for her, then, what it has done for many another woman—kept her up to the pitch of the part she had attempted; so that the impressive yet delirious cry of Teresa, mad of being delivered, and Kitty did not have the count's address in Venice.

After that Kitty brooded, deeply and often; over the temptation to suicide. The fear of Carlo's contempt had ever been the keenest of all her sorrows, and she was in a position to which her helplessness on board the yacht had condemned her.

"All is over between him and me," she said to herself, in bitter grief. "His pride would prevent his having anything to do with me. Though he knew that I was his wife, he would not have touched me. He despised me for having been called his wife. Yet, I was no coward. I did the best I could. When I think of how utterly helpless I was, in the power of my tormentor, alone on the ocean with him, I feel that I was a brave woman. I am able to make terms with him! He feared that I would kill myself—he saw that I had the resolution to do it—and he would lose the rich plunder his avarice courted, so he entered into bonds with me. Ay, I hold him to his terms! And now, I am free! I can help it. I shall love him, Alberto dare to sneer at my 'hopeless love'—to taunt me with my love for the count! I shall lose my reason, some day. How horribly have I been punished for that waywardness which I thought so brave!"

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SUN SHINES THROUGH A CLOUD.

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My dove with the tender eye,
When she sings a sad and passionate cry—
There is some one dying or dead—TENNYSON.

When Philip Armory sent up his card from one of the parlors of the Everett House, the morning following his visit to the opera, to Madame Franca, only the dark-faced servant came down to answer it.

"Madame cannot see you this morning Mr. Armory. She is in affliction. There has been—sudden illness—and death. Monsieur Franca is dead. He died—of pneumonia, about—an hour ago. Madame begs you will call again this evening, and—requests that you do not speak of her to any one."

The woman was evidently excited, yet making a great effort to restrain herself. She spoke with curious hesitation; a deep light glittered in her eyes, it would almost seem as if for very joy.

As for Philip, he could not, at first, speak at all. He was utterly confounded by this news. That fierce, dark man who had sung with her last night, dead! Kitty, a widow! Free! His heart gave a wild leap of exultation—then sunk coldly down, half-appalled at its own selfishness. Kitty in trouble! That was the way to think of it—Kitty mourning her dead!

It was fully two minutes before he answered the messenger:

"Can I, then, be of no help?"

She prolonged it, it was but retribution that she should laugh that he was dead.

After Philip went away, Kitty said to her servant:

"Undress me quickly, Teresa; I am tired and sleepy. Ah, Heaven! how sweet it is to dare to sleep soundly once more! Teresa, are you glad for me or sorry for him?"

"I am glad for madame," answered Teresa, quietly; and so she was.

At first her interest had been for her employer; but Kitty had long since won the hard woman's heart, and she had been so faithful and faithful servant to her. It would have been dangerous for Alberto to have attempted to break over his promise, with that dragon guarding her sweet young mistress.

"Dear soul, how like an infant she sleeps!" murmured Teresa, as, in a few minutes after she had tucked her in bed, Kitty went off into childish dreams, with smiling, parted lips and rosy cheeks kissed by curling tendrils of silky hair.

There were hired watchers for the dead; so the woman trusted herself to her mistress, snatching a little rest from time to time, as she sat in an arm-chair all night by Kitty's bed.

Philip was both happy and miserable as he made his way back to Brooklyn to tell the banker his daughter's strange story.

He was happy to think Kitty was safe and free; he was wretched to think he had "no part or lot" in her fortunes—that she loved all her friends but him.

"I must leave Mr. Kanell's, of course, My mother and I must find a little house, somewhere, where we can do nothing that I should intrude upon her, after the declaration of my feelings which I made in Newport."

That night he and Mr. Kanell had a long and stormy interview; the result of the story which Philip had to tell.

Kitty arose early, and had Teresa dress her carefully; then she sat down by the window to watch.

"I am going to take breakfast at home, Teresa," she kept repeating to her maid every few moments.

"I will bring madame a cup of coffee here, before she goes out in the cold," and Teresa did so.

While Kitty was drinking it there was a knock at the door; she set down her cup and ran to open it herself, ready to throw herself into her father's arms; but it was not Mr. Kanell who stood there—only Philip Armory.

"Where is my father?"

"He did not come."

Looking in Philip's embarrassed countenance, she gathered the truth.

"He has cast me off! I am not to go to him!"

"He is up in arms about your going on the stage. The Kanell pride has received a blow."

"What else could I have done, Mr. Armory? If it had not been for my singing I should have lost my senses. What could I have done other than I did do, situated as I was? Papa is hard

under the circumstances, could have no validity in the eyes of God or man. That night of the *file* in Newport was seized by him and his creatures, forced into a boat, placed on board his yacht, and carried off to sea. I was a helpless girl alone with that villain. All on board were hired to second his interests. He claimed me as his wife—said that he had the legal right to seize me and compel me to accompany him. I will tell you how, in my despair, I yet refused to yield to the odds against me—how I forced a compromise from him. Sit down."

Both had stood, in the profound agitation of the meeting; she motioned him to sit at the other end of the sofa on which she now sunk down, and, with flushing cheeks and sparkling eyes, and sweet, clear voice thrilling with the vibrant ring of truth, she gave the singular story of her partnership with Alberto.

"I thought him," she said, triumphantly. "It was my money he wanted—not me! Avarice was his strongest passion, and I led him by it. Teresa will swear to you that I never was alone one moment with that scoundrel. Yet there was nothing for me to do, but to pass as his wife. I was in his power, and I had to make the best bargain I could. Mr. Armory, do you think papa will blame me? Do you think I could have done otherwise than as I did, and preserve my good name? Will you go to my father and tell him that his little Kitty has come back to him as pure as when she went away—as much his own little Kitty as ever. That she wants to come back to him and try how good she can be—a better girl than the willful, troublesome Kitty of the old days."

She was looking at him coaxingly, with the little mouth pursed up and the blue eyes full of sweet tears.

With the death of her tormentor it seemed to Kitty that her heart, soul and body sprung up elastic, as from under a crushing spell; the long year and a half of terror—during which she would have gone mad had not music afforded her an employment by means of which she might forget herself at times—was almost as if it had never been. Philip watched her, entranced, fascinated, admiring, more than words can tell, the wonderful courage and spirit which had brought her out of that dark period of her life.

"You are a brave girl," he said, warmly; "a real heroine."

"Am I not? Yes, I would rather fight Indians than be again on that vessel, a prisoner as I was. Yes, I am a chip of the old block, Mr. Armory. You know my great-grandmother fought in the Revolution, in boy's clothes. That would be lots more fun than the kind of mental warfare I had to carry on."

Truly this was Kitty Kanell, sitting on the sofa, talking to him! Philip felt the old spell of her playful witchery creeping over him. There were "none like her—none!"

"Thank God, you are safe," fervently.

"I do thank God," answered Kitty, with sudden, sweet solemnity. "Do not think me heartless, Mr. Armory, because I can be almost gay in the presence of sudden death. If you could only imagine half what I have suffered!" with a shudder.

"Why! only last evening, when I saw you in the parquette looking at me with those reproachful eyes, I was the most miserable girl on the face of the earth. If Alberto had lived, I should have kept the secret of my life with him, for he had my promise. My only hope, yesterday, was that he would squander my fortune quickly, and then, when he had gotten the last dollar, let me go. Now, to-day, I am free! I am Kitty Kanell again! My heart sings in my breast. I cannot help it. I shall be with my father—I shall see Lilia and Florian—I shall go with him! You will tell papa all about it to-night; to-morrow he will come for me!"

Philip said "yes," but he said it with a sigh. He had no part in this joy of Kitty's; he had only a convenience to her; she had sent for him because he was the first acquaintance who presented himself on her return.

"Go now, Mr. Armory," cried Kitty, with all her old impulsiveness. "Fly! tell papa all. He will be so glad to hear of it. Tell him for me early. I want to breakfast with him! I shall be up and waiting. I shall be awfully grateful to you. Where do you live now? How is your dear, kind mother?"

She was her father's housekeeper. You will see her in the morning."

She did not notice the bitterness in the poor clerk's tone.

"I am so glad! How nice it is for my father to have such a lady in place of Miss Parsely. Kiss your dear mother for me, Mr. Armory. And now, please go. I shall improve the scene, while you are telling papa. It will take you an hour to reach him—it is half-past eight now—at half-past nine you will stand in his august presence and say: 'Kitty wants to come home! Kitty is waiting for her papa to come for her!'"

She burst into a silvery laugh of pure joy. The echo of that laugh crept into the adjoining room where Alberto lay still under a white pall—he could not rouse himself and put down that laugh with a cruel look out of his wicked eyes.

Fool girl! He had made her suffer agonies prolonged. It was but retribution that she should laugh that he was dead.

After Philip went away, Kitty said to her servant:

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"I am going to take breakfast at home, Teresa," she kept repeating to her maid every few moments.

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"Where is my father?"

"He did not come."

Looking in Philip's embarrassed countenance, she gathered the truth.

"He has cast me off! I am not to go to him!"

"He is up in arms about your going on the stage. The Kanell pride has received a blow."

"What else could I have done, Mr. Armory? If it had not been for my singing I should have lost my senses. What could I have done other than I did do, situated as I was? Papa is hard

and unreasonable. He is perfectly heartless! He loves his dignity better than he loves his daughter. And he shall never be troubled by me again. Tell him so, Mr. Armory. Tell him that his child will make her own way in the world. Why, Teresa, here, loves me more than he does! Very well, if I make his hard heart ache with real sorrow, some day, he will have only himself to blame.

"I do not think Mr. Kanell gives full credit to your story. At all events, he is vexed and irritated beyond the point where he can be reasonable. I am very sorry. I am afraid he thinks me an impertinent meddler, for I spoke very plainly to him last night. I assure you, it was not easy for me to come here with his message."

"What was his message?"

"That you are a stranger to him."

"He never did love me," said Kitty, with quivering lips. "He never really loved any one but himself—not even my poor mamma."

Then the Kanell blood leaped into her cheek and its pride into her eyes.

"He shall never be troubled with word from me again. I am eighteen—my own mistress. I have plenty of money of my own—thank Heaven! I am not indebted to him, even for that—and 'the world is all before me where to choose.' Tell him he has driven me back upon the stage—that he is worse than the dead villain lying in yonder room. Tell him that I will come to Brooklyn and sing in the Academy there, on purpose to please him. Tell him—that I—her little foot passionately, her resentment growing as she went—"that I will take care to sing there as Kitty Kanell! I never was the wife of that dead man; and he had no name to give me, if I had been his wife. I am Kitty Kanell still; and as Kitty Kanell I will triumph over my unlucky star."

"I wish you would place yourself under my mother's care," ventured Philip, fascinated and yet alarmed by this display of spirit. "You are too young and—and beautiful—to get on without a chaperon. Especially as—"

"As cruel accident has compromised me," you would kindly say. Thank you, Mr. Armory. I like your mother, and may ask her to share my fortunes. Do not be too uneasy about my future. I see apprehension written on your face! With youth and beauty and money I am not afraid of being put down! I am going to have my own way now. There is something better in life than being cooped up—"forgive Kitty this naughty expression—"with a cross father in a gloomy old house. Tell him so, with my compliments,

whole family had been murdered. Those whom I questioned could tell me nothing of my son Kirke, nor could I find the family with whom he had been visiting.

"Then I gave my life over to one object; that of revenge. It would be too long were I to tell you how I managed to strike the right trail. Enough that I did, at last, and that I marked out every man of the midnight assassins for death. I was greatly aided by my one friend—Double Dan."

"That's me! my twin brother!" came the queer double voice of the scout, as he entered the glade, followed by three other persons.

"You here! where did you leave your prisoner?"

"Safe an' sound—tied up like a pig in a pack!" grinned Double Dan. "I done fetched some folks to see ye. Miss Missouri Belle, Mister Mark Bird an' Kirke Howard, esquire—make ye known to Double Sight the Death Shot, or Judge."

"Stop, friend," interposed the Death Shot. "Let me finish my explanation, first. I will be as brief as possible. I made use of many disguises in my work, and being a fair ventriloquist, a dabbler in chemistry, as well, I managed to get up a very respectable mystery. I procured me a very fine air-pistol of long range but small bore, and it aided me not a little. The wounds made by its balls were so small that only a close investigation could discern what had dealt the fatal blow. I only used this when I wished to entirely escape observation."

"Not until last year did I suspect that I had a daughter living. Some words that Colonel Overton dropped gave me the clue. Until quite recently I believed that the young lady known as Missouri Belle was my child; and Equality Ebb believed that his daughter was the one who was deceived by his fellow criminal, Overton. It was who stole your child and burned your house, Mr. Marvin. He brought your child to Kansas and there gave her to Mr. and Mrs. Lamb."

"And now it's my turn," interposed Miss Nancy. "You shut up, Hector Lamb! I'm going to tell everything I know. These folks! I know how to make 'lowances for people what was starvin' to death."

And Nancy did tell. How Overton bribed them to keep his daughter and raise it as her own. How they wandered to Texas. There came a hard time. They were literally starving. Too proud to beg, one dark night they sallied out to their nearest neighbors, and using an axe, Hector Lamb killed two fatening hogs. They were caught at this work by Overton and another man, and they fled, leaving their axe behind them.

That same night the Howard ranch was burned. And just before dawn Overton came to them, bearing a little girl, which he wished them to exchange for the one I most keenly desired. The only answer he could give was to demure, but he threatened them with exposure as hog-thieves. They begged for time, for they had learned to love the child dearly. That same morning the report spread that the neighbor whom they had attempted to rob, was found dead in his bed slain by the stroke of an axe. And Overton threatened to swear the crime upon them unless they agreed to perform his will in every particular. Though this murder was almost lost sight of in the wild excitement which followed the death of the neighbor, the Lamb knew that it would require but a word to set the mob upon them.

"We couldn't do nothing," he said the ax we used to kill the hogs with. He said he'd swear he see us comin' out o' the man's house, in the night. So we can't only give way to his will."

He told us that in a few days a man would call for the child, an' told us how we might know he was the right one. Otel he did come, we might keep the young 'un mighty close, so nobody'd ever see it. He made us change their clothes, an' said only give way to his will. 'Tother, an' the man who axed for it. We did just as he said. A week afterwards, the man come. He give us the sign that showed he was the right person. An' when he went away, he took the child with him."

The Death Shot quietly led the two maidens forward, and spoke to Nancy Lamb.

"Are these the two children you have spoken of?"

"I kin swear to this one," said the woman, drawing Minnie to her side. "She is the one Overton brought last; the one I most keenly desired. The daughter of Isaac Howard. As fer 'tother, ef she is the baby I tended for better'n two years, she's got a bad scar on her right arm, above the elbow."

With a wondering eye, Missouri Belle pushed up her sleeve. Even in the gathering gloom the significant scar could be distinguished.

There was a sobbing cry—and Mrs. Marvin fell upon the neck of her long-lost daughter, while the trembling arms of the husband and father clung to each other.

Respecting their emotions, the remainder of the party withdrew to a little distance, where the Death Shot resumed his interrupted story.

There is no particular necessity for us to follow his explanations step by step. A word or two concerning those points which have been more particularly brought before the reader must suffice.

From the hour in which his suspicions were aroused that his daughter lived, Isaac Howard never lost sight of his prey. Day and night he dogged them, unable to rest, lest he should lose the truth. He it was that rescued Equality Ebb, when that scoundrel was precipitated upon the bull's back in the circus ring, because he would not let his enemy should die with his secret untold. He it was that dogged the spy to the outlaws' quarters last the same night he saw, cut short his report with a shot from his air-pistol through the barred window. He also shot the fero dealer, and James Brown, the convicted traitor. These three men were of those who had murdered his family, years before.

He visited Equality Ebb at Black Swamp, intending to play the role of Colonel Overton, but the Wolf, suddenly aroused from a troubled sleep, gave a yell of alarm, and to save his own life Howard was obliged to strike him down. As he fled for safety, he grasped Missouri Belle, not knowing who she was, and took her with him.

As the reader knows, Overton, believing his shot fatal, plunged into the water to rescue the girl. Instead, he was grappled by both Double Dan and Howard. In the struggle that ensued, Overton was stabbed and choked senseless. A single word set Double Dan to work, and while Howard rescued Missouri Belle, his friend was dragging Overton through the swamp to where the trusty black horse was tethered.

How boldly the Death Shot played his assumed part, how completely he averted all suspicion, how he kept his secret, and how Double Dan had heard when spying upon the real Overton, added to the notes in the captured memorandum-book, it was easy for the Death Shot to deceive the Chaparral Wolf.

Double Dan, while hiding with his prisoner in the swamp, overheard the stormy scene between Missouri Belle and the cousins, and watching his chance, made himself known to them, and told them a portion of what was in the wind. As a natural result, it was decided that they should proceed to the Buffalo Hump.

With a few brief remarks, our story proper is ended. The maiden whom we have known thus far as Minnie Lamb was recognized as the daughter of Isaac Howard, and the sister of Kirke. That she was half smothered with kisses may readily be imagined. Nor was Mark Bird at all backward in claiming his share, as a cousin. Dashing Ned added his congratulations, but Minnie noted, with a sharp pang, that he was far more deeply interested in her whom we have known as Missouri Belle. The warm glow in his fine eyes, betrayed by the crackling camp-fire, she could not mistake.

The situation was a peculiar one. Minnie loved Dashing Ned; he loved Missouri Belle, also did Kirke Howard, also; Missouri Belle loved Mark Bird, while he had eyes only for his cousin Minnie.

But "time works wonders," and it assuredly did in this case. Before a year had rolled by, the cards in Love's pack were shuffled and dealt

anew. Partners were changed, and at least four of the players were completely satisfied. Within the same month, there were weddings in Texas and in Missouri. Dashing Ned settled in Texas as a farmer and stock-raiser, in the latter State, and "Missouri Belle" presides over his growing household. In Texas the old ranch was rebuilt, and Minnie consented to make Mark Bird happy. As for Kirke, he lives with them, a confirmed old bachelor. He has never forgotten his first love, and he will carry her image with him to the grave.

Double Dan is still alive, and nearly as swift-footed as ever. When he and his "twin brother" go under, there will be more than one mourning household in Texas.

That same night, after the general explanation and "clearing up," Isaac Howard and Double Dan mounted and rode rapidly toward Black Swamp. They reached the place where Colonel Overton had been confined, but it was empty! By some means he had slipped his bonds, and mounting the famous black stallion, had fled for his life. But though for years his fate was a mystery to the whites, the truth came out at last.

CHAPTER XXXIV.
HUNTED DOWN.

A BLACK stallion is running low and swift beneath the blazing noonday sun. Its silken coat is stained with sweat, with foam and with blood—blood not all its own. The rider upon its back is a pale, thin, desperate-looking man. He turns his head and glances to the rear. A grating curse parts his lips. The hunted light in his snake-like eyes grows deeper, his face seems thinner and more haggard.

Yet far away, but hanging upon his trail like human bloodhounds, ride a full score of red-dictive warriors, armed with lance and rifle, with paint upon their faces and blood in their eyes. They have marked their prey and the chase will end only in death.

The fugitive turns to his noble horse. He tightens the reins, strokes the dripping neck, speaks encouragingly in the small, pointed ear. The stallion tosses his proud head and answers the call. For a minute his mighty muscles play like exquisitely-tempered steel springs. Space is devoured. Red after red is flung behind him in those deer-like leaps. And the thin lips of the fugitive curl away from his pointed teeth, as he casts an exultant glance back at his pursuers. He begins to taste the sweets of freedom and renewed hope.

Again the black stallion tosses its head. It utters a low, husky whimper. It cannot breathe freely. A cruel cord seems tightening around its throat. It turns its head as though to ask its rider the meaning of this strange spell that cramps its limbs and oppresses its lungs.

The only answer is a curse, and the man drives his heels into the steaming flanks. He well knows the reason; and so does the bloodhounds upon the trail. The bending grass-blades are spotted here and there with crimson blotches. They know that the end is near. And with exultant yells they urge their laboring ponies on.

The fugitive is Turn-over, the half-breed; the pursuers are Whirlwind and his Kiowa braves. Since early dawn the chase has lasted. There was one rapid volley as the half-breed sped past their covert. The Kiowas set out in hot pursuit, nothing discouraged by the ease and rapidity with which the black stallion distanced them at first. They mark the scarlet trail, and know that those frothy drops came from near the seat of life. And as the hours pass, they gain, slowly but surely upon their victim.

The nature of the ground is changing. Turn-over rises in his stirrups and casts a swift glance ahead. The level plain becomes broken and more difficult. There is scattered timber ahead of him. He glances back, and sees the pursuers, then glances back. The Kiowas are spreading out in a semicircle, as though to cut him off should he attempt to deviate from a direct course. Why should they expect him to do for them this advantage? Surely the trail is open in front.

The timber is scattered in groups of two and three trees. Any one of them would afford a good chance for a fight for life, if only he was armed. A revolver—even a knife would be worth a fortune, now!

He glances to the plateau rides the fugitive. He dare choose no other course. The Indians are too near his heels. Right ahead is a thick clump of timber. Beyond this the ground rises, wild and broken, covered with huge masses of rock. The event of the chase is plain. Once there he surely can find a hiding-place so secure that not even such human bloodhounds can ferret him out.

Thinking thus, he urges his falling horse on—riding straight to his doom.

He plunges through the timber, then wrenches it with his horse with a furious curse. Right at his feet lies a frightful abyss, five hundred feet in depth, the perpendicular sides bristling with sharp points and angles. The chasm is full five and twenty feet in width. The rocks rise abruptly on the further side. There is no plain foothold for a horse after such a leap. But the exultant yells of his bloodthirsty pursuers are ringing in his ears. Unarmed, certain death awaits him; there is just a chance by attempting the frightful leap.

He urges his horse to the brink, but it refuses the leap. It seems to know that its weakened powers are unequal to the task.

Not yet does Overton despair. He leaps to the ground, flings his coat over the stallion's eyes, then runs him forward and over the brink. One over and the poor brute falls, until the jagged rocks below grant him a merciful death. Overton dares not wait to see the result. His enemies are too near. He runs lightly along the edge of the chasm until he reaches a long hollow log that lies rotting upon the plain. Into this he crawls his body. The chance is indeed a faint one; but there is none other.

The Kiowas burst through the timber, expecting to seize their prey, for right well they knew what a formidable barrier lay in the course of his flight. And as he lies in the hollow log, Overton hears their cries and exclamations of wondering disappointment. He can see them clustering around the fresh hoof-prints. He can see them peering down into the vast depth, and his heart grows sick as he fears they will discover his deception. He closes his eyes. As Whirlwind glances toward his covert. He fears lest their glittering bayonets betray him. But as the chief speaks, fresh hope springs up in his heart.

"Turn-over is laughing at the Kiowas. He has leaped his horse over, and is now far away. But his scalp shall blacken in the smoke of Whirlwind's lodge—I have sworn it!"

"We will find his trail upon the other side, and run him down. His big horse is badly wounded. The coyotes will crack his bones before the sun goes down. Let us go!"

"There is time enough. Our ponies are weary and need food and rest. We will wait here, and eat. I am hungry. See! yonder lies a dry log. It will make a good fire."

The heart of the half-breed grows sick. He knows now that his place of refuge had been discovered. Unarmed, nothing but death awaits him. He will be dragged forth and ruthlessly butchered—perhaps after cruel tortures. He almost envies the fate of his poor horse.

Even in the moment he wondered that he should find it so hard to resign himself to death. He had so often laughed at it—so often dared it face to face, through pure recklessness. But then he was armed. He could return blow for blow. That made all the difference.

He peered forth from his refuge. Whirlwind and three stout braves stood with ready weapons, though in seeming carelessness, before him. The other braves are bringing dried sticks and grass and piling them upon the log. He hears the clinking of knife and steel, and the sound sends a sickening thrill through his heart. Those sounds are to him what fastening down the coffin-lid must be to one lying in a death-like trance, ready for the grave.

He knows when the sparks catch upon the tinder. He can tell when these are blown into a

flame, and he hears the faint crackling as the serpent-tongued flames lick up the dry grass, winding in and out through the only too readily ignited fagots.

And now the dusky fiends raise their wild voices in a triumphant scalp-song, and as the bright flames shoot higher and higher, the doomed victim hears them dancing before his fiery prison in mad glee.

From that moment his nerves become steeled. He knows that death is inevitable, but he will resist to the end. He fights on in desperate revenge. They shall not boast that they killed his courage, as well as his body. Since die he must, he would die in sullen silence.

The flames leap higher. The heat grows more intense. The log is one blazing mass of coals. The suffocating heat fills the hollow. It searces the sullen wretch. His face and scalp are one great blister. His blood seems boiling in his veins. Wild visions of the black past arise before him. He is assailed by a thousand weird phantoms. Devils are grappling with him. He fights—but in vain. They drag him forth from his blazing refuge—

A horrible yell bursts from his lips, and rendered insane by the frightful torture, he works his way out of the fiery circle. As he springs his hands and feet burst into flame. He is a mass of living fire!

The savages range themselves in a semicircle, of which the edge of the chasm forms the chord. As the blazing, maddened half-breed rushes forward, he is met and turned back by his back is wounded, though he scowls at the wretched savages. Time and again is he thus repulsed.

Then—for one brief instant his brain seems to clear. He glances swiftly around him. He rushes to the brink of the abyss. He rises in the air—looks forward—alights fairly upon the further bank!

But his powers are exhausted in that mighty effort. He totters—sinks down upon his knees. A fragment of rock gives way beneath his weight. He catches upon his breast. Inch by inch he slips down. He fights on desperately for his life. But the fates are against him.

One wild scream of horror—a swift-falling form from which the flames burst out anew—a faint thud!

Turn-over, the half-breed, was dead!

THE END.

Johnnie Armstrong;

The King of the Moss-Troopers.

A Romance of the Scottish Border.

BY COL. DELLE SARA.

JOHNNIE ARMSTRONG was taken at last, the bold moss-trooper of all the bold riders, Ebb, on the border-land, had laughed to scorn both the lion and the thistle banner—was safe and sound in the strong box in Edinburgh, there to be tried for his life for high treason.

This Johnnie Armstrong was a bold spearman who had set himself up as a king on the border, and as he was backed by a troop of doughty riders, who feared neither man nor devil, it was a long time before he was brought to grief; but the pitcher that goes often to the well, etc.—the adage is old and true; and so it happened that, after five years of successful defiance both to Scotland and to England, for it often happened that bold Johnnie, when he was scarce in Scotland did not scruple to cross the English line and drive a foray even into

Yorkshire. He was a king on the border, and on occasions, hotly pursued by the English spearmen over the border line, Johnnie had run full tilt into a large Scottish force sent expressly to capture him.

To fight was out of the question, and so, with some scruple, Johnnie abandoned the fight. English spears that were so much needed to replenish the larder at home and cried out to his men:

"Each for himself and the fiend take the hindmost!"

The English spearmen scattered and prepared to lead the king's soldiers a merry chase, as they had often done before; for, being perfectly familiar with the ground, they were able to easily baffle pursuit.

A good horse and a sharp pair of spurs will often set a man's neck in this world! Johnnie exclaimed, as he rode gayly away; but, fate was against him this time; his horse put his foot in a hole, down went the beast on his knees, and though the rider was as good as one as ever bestride a steed, he was still in mortal man to keep the saddle under such circumstances.

The moss-trooper turned a complete summer-set and landed upon the flat of his broad back. Although half-stricken by the fall he managed to scramble to his feet and draw his trusty blade, but a dozen horsemen surrounded him and a dozen weapons menaced his life.

"Strike him not!" cried the voice of one who was evidently a captain in the band. "It is Johnnie Armstrong himself, and the regent will give him a broad gold-piece to hold him a prisoner, unharmed, in Edinburgh town."

"That will never be!" exclaimed the moss-trooper, making a desperate rush forward and endeavoring to break through the line of steel which surrounded him, but, what could one man—ever though that man was Johnnie Armstrong—do against a host?

Quickly they beat him to his knees, then by main force pressed him to the earth and bound his stout, strong limbs with cruel cords, and like the vilest criminal carried him straight to Edinburgh.

Great was the glee of the regent and his court when the news of the capture reached them, and in great crowds the gallants of Edinburgh came to look upon the man who had for so long a time defied the power of the royal forces.

The regent swore roundly with many an oath that the capture of the outlaw was worth the loss of a strong tower.

And then they put the moss-trooper upon his trial.

The lord came forward and swore that Johnnie had harried his lands and stolen fifty beaves.

"He is my foe—he and all his clan!" Johnnie had answered, indignantly. "Many's the time that he and his have come with fire and brand against me!"

"A lie—a lie!" the lordling protested. "I take Heaven to witness I never did him harm except in self-defense; and surely it is no wrong to strike back when rudely attacked!"

Another lord repeated the tale; a third and a fourth took up the cry. Never was there such a ruffianly ruffian as Johnnie Armstrong!

The moss-trooper's plea that he but returned the blows which had been given him, a little harder perhaps, but still provoked, went for nothing.

The Lord Chief Justice, who sat on the bench—for Johnnie was tried with all the honors—decided that the border lord was a most thorough villain and to blame in every case, and then, after due argument and grave deliberation, Johnnie Armstrong was sentenced to be hung—to die the death of a dog.

Vainly the outraged outlaw pleaded for a soldier's death; the law decreed the rope, and the rope it must be.

They carried the now desperate man back to his prison-cell and locked him tightly in. Short time had they given the moss-trooper to make his peace with Heaven, for within a week he was to stretch the rope.

The news of the death to which Johnnie Armstrong had been doomed sent a chill of horror through the border-side, for to the notions of these border folk there was no very great harm in raiding a few fat beaves now and then, when the larder was empty and the good wife wanted meat.

To one heart more than any other the news came with crushing force, and this was to the wife of the moss-trooper, who dwelt in the big round tower, the home of the Armstrongs since the days when the clan first became known.

A wee little woman was the wife of the borderer, but as dauntless in courage as the bold moss-trooper himself.

When the tidings came that Johnnie Armstrong languished in jail, and within a week his neck would stretch, there was many a loud oath and deep imprecation in the Armstrong tower; but, neither oath nor threat could help the captive's despair.

Safe in Edinburgh jail he bided, and not even England's power could tear him thence; how then could the border lords hope to help their captive friend?

But, woman's wit succeeds sometimes when man's skill and cunning are of no avail.

The wife of the captive, impelled by that great love which dwelt in her heart for the father of her children, thought of a scheme by means of which he might be saved.

This scheme she did not impart to a mortal soul; she was almost afraid to whisper it to herself in the silence of her chamber lest some spirit of the air might carry it to the ears of the moody regent at Edinburgh.

Ten trusty men she took with her, the best of her husband's band, and setting out at night by unfrequented roads made the best of her way to Edinburgh.

Two days before the one on which her husband was doomed to die she arrived at the capital.

A desperate device she had planned, and this was nothing more nor less than the kidnapping of the Lord Chief Justice of the realm, the man who had condemned her husband to death, and holding him a hostage for the safety of the moss-trooper.

A wild and reckless plan but the very boldness of it made it successful.

The moss-troopers, when the matter was confided to them, which was not until the last moment, swore by their thumbs to attempt it even though it cost the life of every one of them.

The gates of the city were not closed until nine, the Chief Justice, whose abode was quite near to one of the gates, was assaulted as he left his house shortly after eight in the evening to go to the palace, plucked violently from the midst of his escort, who fled in terror from the naked blades of the force moss-troopers, wrapped in a cloak and carried in haste through the city gates before the astonished warden could discover what was the matter.

Pursuit of course was given at once, but the desperate band had far too much start and easily gained their wild fastness with their prey.

Safe in the border-land, the wife of Johnnie Armstrong made known her conditions.

"Prisoner for prisoner," she declared.

The regent, on being sworn that he would hang the moss-trooper without delay, but the lady swore fully as stoutly that if he did the Lord Chief Justice should swing.

And the regent dared not fulfill his threat, for he feared that the wife of the moss-trooper would be good as her word, and so, to make a long story short, after due deliberation and great delivery of words, the moss-trooper was exchanged for the man who had sentenced him to hang.

The wild rider had been saved by the wee little woman who dwelt in the round tower, and there was no moss-trooper in his band half as good a man as the wife of Johnnie Armstrong.

"The Styles" in Hair.

FANCIFUL complications of finger-puffs, set high on the head, are in greater favor than any other style in the arrangement of the hair. Frizzes and short curls around the face are very much worn, and in many instances are brought so low upon the forehead as to be in very bad taste. This, however, is only done by those who in all things rush into extremes. The best class of people and who dress with most taste preserve moderation.

"Banging" the hair across the forehead, although chiefly adopted by children, is, nevertheless, seen in the case of grown persons. A unique style of coiffure consists of a small, soft curl worn high on the head and the front hair "banged." In consequence of the tendency toward unique complications, ornamental combs are in much favor. Oftentimes the comb is placed at the back of a cluster of puffs, in securing support, thereby, or again, it is put carelessly wherever it may seem appropriate. Tortoiseshell combs are oftentimes seen, but jet, ivory, gold, or silver form not infrequent additions among the wealthier classes, while persons of moderate means content themselves with imitations.

Braids, except in chateleine style, are seldom seen; they are not excluded, but they are hardly in favor. If the coil, whether twisted or braided, be worn, it should not be large. Curls are seldom worn, long curls not at all. At all times, however, and especially for evening wear, are a very graceful finish, but at present should not exceed four inches in length.

The Grecian coil can hardly be mentioned as fashionable; it is rather an occasional and allowable departure from the fashionable ideas, indulged in at times by ladies who tire of sameness, and who now and then introduce a sort of abandon into the toilet, which, within limits, is not displeasing. Another style, which may be mentioned rather as an allowable departure from conventional coiffure than as the adopted mode of dressing the hair, is the Pompadour roll in front, over which the hair is drawn plainly back to meet finger-puffs or soft coils. It is quite becoming to some faces, and the more pleasing because not so often seen. Puffs, braids or coils placed "half-way" on the head—that is, neither high nor low—is an objectionable style. Make your choice; arrange your hair either quite low or high, but do not halt half-way.

"Coquettes," showing the hair softly waved without a part, and curled, and attached to a wire by which they can be inserted under finger-puffs or any other style of coiffure, are quite pretty and afford variety. They cost \$1.25. Invisibles of gray hair are particularly desirable for elderly ladies, and range in price from \$8 to \$15, the latter being of pure white hair.

First-class gray hair, especially long hair, is very expensive, increasing rapidly in price as it approaches pure white; and for this reason a substitute has been introduced in the "refined" hair, which is the better liked as it becomes better known. The difference from real hair cannot be told except by an expert. It can be mixed with other hair to any desired extent, when partially gray hair is desired, and of course at proportionately less cost than when real white hair is mixed in.

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MORNING.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

The morn begins to break—in pieces
The darkness, with the morn, ceases;
And those who've dreamt they've slept a year
Are now beginning to appear;
And everybody is as cross
As double X's, and full of sauce.
After a night's serene repose
You'd like to know the matter with those—
Who all forget their pleasant dreams
And fill the house with growls and screams.
That person never yet was born
Who gets up smiling in the morn.
I wonder why the prettiest face
At morning wears but little grace?
It seems that beauty which you love
Is all left in the room above.
The morning is a trying time
To loveliness, in any clime.
Life seems to be begun again
In style that goes against the grain.
And best of tempers in the wake
Are somehow very sure to break.
And everything is upside down
With the best people in the town.
A very early morning call
Don't come in "relaxes" at all.
The milkman rings thrice at the gate
For the maid, as usual, is late.
You give the fire another turn:
Your fingers not the wood will burn.
Cold water on your faces freezes
While your desire of cleanliness ceases.
You knew just when your neighbors woke
The time his flues began to smoke.
The good things you laid off to do
Today you recollect but few.
The ill-deeds you laid off to do
Quite properly have passed away.
The air is full of breakfast scents—
Fried ham and eggs with condiments.
The frequent blows of the catarrh
And morning coughs resound afar.
The wrinkles round your eyes are deep;
You wear a general air of sleep.
You don't feel pretty good, and move
Up closer to the kitchen stove.
Till breakfast is announced at last;
Then you warm up by eating fast.

Mississippi River Life in '56.

A Series of Western Character Sketches.
BY PHILIP S. WARNE,
AUTHOR OF "TIGER DICK," "ELEGANT ROBERT,"
ETC.

THE PRIDE OF THE ST. LOUIS.

WITH his shovel the fireman of the Belle of the Missouri threw open the furnace-doors, letting the ruddy light stream all over him and far out into the night. When he tossed in the wood, the flames leaped up and lapped at voraciously. Then the doors were closed, and the phantoms of the night chased the light to the very portals of its retreat.
"Crossgrove," said the fireman, "what makes you so somber to-night?"
The engineer came out of his reverie, rose and looked at the steam-gauge, tried the water-cocks, saw that the engines were running all right, and sat down again.
"Boys," he said, "this is the anniversary of a queer little bit of romance that happened on the St. Louis, five years ago. I was fired then, under as good an engineer as ye could scare up."
"Old Mart Kimball had his ways, as the best of us does; but I reckon that everybody who had dealin's with him found that he'd come in on the level an' go out on the square."
"He wa'n't much on handsome; but he could chew a bigger cud o' tobacco than any man I ever see; an' he could stan' up under a power o' chain-lightnin'." Mart crossed his arms.
"He wa'n't on the beat anywhar except at cards; but that he could stock 'em an' deal from the top or bottom jest beautiful! But he always said that when two galsots sot down to gamble, it was an understood thing that it was to be o'ther an' which between 'em, which could skin the other out o' his eye-teeth; an' the one that got his comb cut mustn't squeal."
"To wind up on, Mart never shook a friend, nor was backed down by a foe."
"Wal, one night we was goin' up the river when the darkness was so thick that it come powerful nigh scrapin' all the paint off the flag-staff cuttin' through it. I reckon if you'd cut a chunk out you wouldn't see it from soft coal."
"I had jest been firin' up, an' banged to the last door, when Mart ripped out an oath that made me jump; fur he spit it out jest like a pistol-shot."
"The he yelled:
"But before I could raise a finger, he grabbed the shovel out o' my hand, opened the door himself, dropped the shovel an' run for'ard."
"That I see him look out ahead, then throw himself flat on his belly and reach over the side."
"I heard a slight bump ag'in the side, and started for'ard to see what Mart had picked up; but, fellers, I hadn't got ten steps before he yelled to me:
"Shut down them blasted engines, before they pull my arms out at the shoulders!"
(Here we need not render Crossgrove's narrative faithfully; for he repeated verbatim the profanity with which Mart Kimball, in his excitement, enforced his injunction, but which we spare the reader.)
"Gents," pursued the engineer, "that was that in Mart Kimball's voice, as he gritted his words between his teeth, that let me know that he was hangin' on to somethin' like grin death; an' you bet I wa'n't slow in backin' them engines fur all they was worth."
"I heard the pilot holler through the speakin'-tube:
"Hollo! What's up?"
"But I didn't waste no breath on him."
"I heard Mart Kimball swearin' like a lunatic; an' when I turned, after reversin' the engines, I see him standin' up an' holdin' a bundle in his hands that dripped with water."
"In his quiet moments Mart wouldn't 'a' done to run a Bible-class; but when he was mad or excited he'd jest raise slate shingles off'n any meetin'-house that 'ud hold him. Now he was jest rollin' out the swear-words in solid chunks, so fast that they tumbled over each other. You bet he was a mad Mart, about somethin'—nobody knowed what."
"All of a sudden he belched out a bigger oath than any o' the rest, an' follered it up with:
"What a blasted fool I be, standin' hyar, doin' nothin' but yawp! Hallo, thar! bring lights aft!"
"With that he laid his drippin' bundle down on the deck, passed me on the keen jump, grabbed up a lantern and went aft, dodgin' between the wood an' freight like chain-lightnin' through a crab-apple orchard."
"By this time the roustabouts were crawlin' out o' their holes, an' the captain come tumblin' down the stairs, lookin' mighty white around the gills. The passengers, too, had got wind o' the row; an' they was a scar-out communitary, fur rocks!
"Without tryin' to answer the half-million or so questions that they asked all in a breath, I said:
"This way, cap'n!"
"An' grabbin' a lantern, I run aft with the captain on my heels.
"There we see Mart Kimball flashin' the light of his lantern over the water, aster, aster. The captain shivered through the roustabouts, grabbed Mart, an' demanded:

"What in blazes is the matter?"
"That's the matter," yelled Mart. "An' I thought, at the first glance, that he was shakin' his fist under the captain's nose. But he kept on:
"D'ye see that? That's out of a woman's head—that is! That blasted river pulled her out o' my grip; an' now she's out thar, some's, jest because them infernal engines couldn't be stopped quick enough."
"Then I see he had a handful o' long ha'r in his fist.
"Get out a boat!" yelled the captain; an' the way that boat was launched, wa'n't slow.
"By this time the pilot was ringin' like mad to go ahead. I had forgotten all about the engines, that was blazin' away on the reverse, an' I was too much excited to pay any attention to the bell; but Mart had answered that ring so often that I reckon, if the ghost of his grandmother had appeared before him, he'd 'a' made the old lady wait until he changed them eccentricities."
"So Mart jumped through the crowd an' set the wheels a-goin' the other way; an' as we begun to gain head ag'in the current, I felt three distinct bumps, which showed how near we had come to driftin' on a rocky shoal."
"Then Mart went for'ard an' got the bundle he'd left on the deck, an' brought it back to whar the light from the open furnace door would fall on it; an' I heard a sound that surprised me at first, though it was natural enough. It was the cryin' of a baby.
"You'd orter 'a' seen Mart, as he held it. It might 'a' been glass, he hung onto it so gingerly.
"Don't cry, little 'un," says he, an' I never heard his voice so soft an' coaxin'.
"Then he looked up, an' thar was somethin' powerful solemn an' sorrowful in his face, as he says, says he:
"I shouldn't wonder if it knowed, somehow, that its dam is just the fun o' eatin' 'em both."
"He went on talkin' to the kid, jest as if it could understand him, an' he says:
"Poor little critter! You're a wee bit of a chick to be all alone in this big world; but I reckon we kin give, a warmer berth than a plank adrift on the Missouri, such a night as this."
"Then he told us how he see the woman floatin' on some boards that might have been a door, or part of the side of a shanty. He reckoned she was in her night clo's; an' it was the white

two hours. Then word come that it was awake.
"We found it in the after cabin, with the stewardess a-feedin' of it with a spoon, an' the hull raft o' women-folks standin' round, bossin' the job.
"They made room fur Mart, an' you'd orter 'a' seen his face, as he went up on tiptoe, with his hat under his arm.
"Boys, I was in California in '49, an' I see a feller pick up a nugget o' gold onc't. He was the only man that I ever see smile anything like Mart smiled when he looked at that baby.
"The women-folks all laughed—they couldn't look at him an' help it. Perhaps that's what sot the baby to cryin'. Mart he grinned worse'n over.
"Then he poked out his finger, as if he was afraid to touch it with his big paw; an' the baby grabbed the finger with both hands an' stuck it into its mouth. I reckon it didn't taste good; fur the baby let go, an' made a very face.
"But Mart was tickled to death; an' whirlin' around he aimed a blow at my ribs, that 'ud 'a' put a hole clean through me, I reckon, if I hadn't parried it.
"At first the women didn't know but it was a fight, an' one o' 'em boller'd right smart, you bet! But Mart clapped both hands on his knees, chuckled back his head, an' laughed fit to raise the hurricane-deck.
"Haw! haw! haw! haw! Pardner, he says to me, pokin' me in the ribs with his thumb, 'd'ye ever see such a little cuss? Took a double half-hitch around that finger, by the way, an' chucked it into its mouth, as if it was a sugar-plum! Haw! haw! haw! he! he! he! ha! ha! ho!"
"While he was laughin' he held up his finger an' performed a sort of war-dance around it. Then he tossed his hat in the air, caught it on the side of his head, stuck his thumbs into the arm-holes of his vest, an' strutted about in a way that 'ud 'a' made a horse laugh. But the baby butted out cryin' before he got well started, an' he quit.
"Hollo! What's broke loose now? says he. 'But my b'iller of the little cuss hain't got more music in its yawp than a hull raft o' steamboat whistles!"
"Mart Kimball says the stewardess, 'you orter be ashamed o' yourself, kickin' up such a rumpus, an' swarin' right before the baby, to say nuffin' 'bout dese hyar ladies dat all heard you!"
"Did I swar? says Mart.

"Why not? You have every requisite for success: position, youth, appearance and wealth."
"But you—"
"Bah! Don't think of me, boy. I am not in the lists, as you say, at all."
"You cannot mean that you do not admire Miss Radcliffe—that you are not in love with her?"
Paul Bonnell laughed—a short, scornful, mirthless laugh it was—and answered, steadily, "I think I admire her as much as you do, only I am beyond the day of heroics; but, as for loving her—why, that is quite out of my line."
La Grange was about to make a bantering answer; but there was something in his companion's face, a dark, brooding shadow, which kept him silent as the two walked on toward the seaside cottage where the woman they had been canvassing stood in her white draperies, making a perfect picture in her white draperies.
"So you are really back," she cried, lightly, advancing a step toward the gentlemen whose coming she had been watching; "and what kind of a time have you had?"
"Delightful," said La Grange.
"And it will be a delightful evening," added Paul Bonnell, quietly. "You will be sure to enjoy the yachting by moonlight."
"Are you not going?" turning toward Paul.
"No."
Paul felt her face betraying the thrill of disappointment that came to her with that low-toned, gravely-indifferent answer, and turned quickly away from the dark, scrutinizing eyes. Paul entered the house. After a few laughing words exchanged with La Grange, Miss Radcliffe, too, entered the hall and ran up the broad stairway that led to her room. By one of the opened windows, looking out upon the sea, Bonnell awaited her.
"Miss Radcliffe, stop a moment," he commanded, as she would have passed him.
Paul stood silent before him, her fair young face proudly calm, her winsome eyes meeting his in a questioning that was both haughty and yet yielding sweetly.
"I wanted to say good-by. I shall be gone when you and the others return to-night."
"Gone? So suddenly? Is there any necessity?" Does Mrs. Chillingworth know how he is? In the excited questioning, the swift flickerings of color in cheek and lips, Paul Bonnell read Pearl Radcliffe's heart.
"Yes," he said, calmly, "there is necessity. I am going to tell Mrs. Chillingworth now."

I thought I could live and not see you. I find I cannot!"
"It is late to tell me that!" she exclaimed, bitterly. "Do you know that I—?"
"That you are to marry La Grange Chillingworth? Yes, I know! God help me—I know! Know, and cannot claim my own! Mine by every right wherewith Nature has molded us two, her children, for each other!"
Pearl stood up and questioned, solemnly:
"Paul Bonnell, has any soul been true to its instincts, and have my senses, only, been confused? Do you love me? You shall tell me!"
"Pearl, I love you as only a man can love the being who is the other half of himself—the one mortal who could complete and perfect his life! Tell me, truly!"
"Then I will marry you! Stop—you shall not tell me that you are poor and lowly born! Your pride shall not separate us. I will fling away all my wealth for your sake. I will come to you as poor as King Cophetia's beggar-maid. I care not what you are to others—to me you are my life, my love, my royal master!"
Paul's arms gathered this woman he loved, and who so madly loved him, to his breast. He covered her mouth with a few fierce kisses. He dropped tears—a strong man's tears, wrung out by agony, hot as his heart's blood, upon her young face.
"Pearl, it cannot be! Heaven help you! How I wish those words might kill you. It would be better so."
He raised her drooping head from his bosom. A line of scarlet crossed her cheek. The girl felt the pain, and saw the look of horror. She put up her hand, and lowered it red and bleeding. "What is it?" she questioned, faintly, her eyes fixed upon his dilated, agonized ones.
"The accursed thing!" he muttered, tearing at a slender golden chain holding a crucifix upon his bosom. "The accursed thing! It is red with her blood, yet I must wear it! Pearl, this badge separates us—separates us—eternally! Paul, I cannot understand you, but you do not frighten me. Tell me what it is that stands between us."
"See your eyes turn from me in aversion? Feel your form shiver with loathing? Never!"
"But I shall not hate, I shall not despise, I shall love, love, just the same!"
"Impossible! Forever must go!"
"Paul, you shall not go, until you make my confession! I will hear it!" The girl clung to him, pale, resolute, passionately strengthening, like some despairing, desperate spirit.
"You will hear? Then go to Lady Dartley; Leaside Park is next this. Tell her Paul Bonnell sent you. She will not spare you nor me. After that, if you can come to me, and say, 'Paul, before we part, hear me—I love you!' you will find me waiting here. Let it be tomorrow. Take one day to think of it. You will repent."
"I shall not!" cried the girl, as Bonnell tore himself away.



"I am come to learn by what oath Paul Bonnell is at your mercy?"

cloth that first caught his eye in the light from the furnace-door.
"Just before the boat struck the raft, he see that it was a woman layin' on her back with somethin' in her arms, which struck him as it might be a baby. So he grabbed the baby with one hand an' the woman's arm with the other. But the current pulled her away from him, an' then he made a second grab fur her, h'ar an' hung on until it came over in his hand."
"When the women on the boat found out that thar was a baby down below, you'd orter 'a' seen 'em come troopin' down the stairs! The way they flocked about Mart an' the baby, you'd 'a' thought they was goin' to eat 'em both up. They called it all the dear little things an' poor little things, an' cried all round, an' wanted to hug it an' kiss it, all drippin' wet as it was."
"But Mark he says:
"Hold on, la, lies! I reckon I've got salvage in this hyar bit o' fotsam."
"An' he act as if he was afraid to let 'em touch it."
"But they to'd him all together that it would ketch its death o' cold, if it had dry clo's on; so after awhile he give it up to the stewardess, to make it comfortable. But he wanted 'em all to understand that he was boss o' the coarsan, an' meant to stand out fur his rights."
"The stiff come back without the woman. Whoever she was, I reckon got under the boat finished her. Then the St. Louis went on her way."
"Them that knowed the ways of the river guessed that some one had built his shanty the shanty to nigh the bank, an' in the darkness an' storm a land-side had chucked the hull out fit into the river; an' when the pilot got hold o' the story, he allowed he could put his finger on the shanty—he'd spotted it, he said, on the last down trip. An' it wa'n't ten mile ahead."
"Sure enough, half a mile below whar the shanty had stood we found a part o' the wreck, caught by a snag. An' pinched between the timbers lay a dead man, what had been called while he was sleepin' an' perhaps dreamin' o' makin' a comfortable home fur the woman an' baby that laid by his side."
"The engineer did not use the word called in the sense in which a minister would have used it. He drew his figure from the game of poker, an' said Mart Kimball, 'Freckon this settles the proprietorship o' that bit o' humanity upstairs. She belongs to the boat, with Mart Kimball as head referee an' general boss. Now, hencefor'ard an' forever, I adopt her as mine, individually an' collectively, so help me Bob!"
"Then he went about his work, whistlin' softly to himself. An' every once in a while he'd snap his fingers an' grin, an' look as if he wanted to cut a pigeon's wing."
"At six we went off duty. He hadn't opened his head fur two hours, perhaps, when all of a sudden he fetched me a punch in the back that nearly floored me; an' when I turned round to see if the dog-gone fool had gone crazy, I found him grinnin' clear back to the years."
"Haw! haw! haw! he belled, like a buffalo calf, 'ole Mart Kimball's a family man! Put it thar, pardner!—put it thar, fur ninety days!"
"An', boys, he grabbed a-holt o' my hand with a grip that made my eyes water."
"Tom Crossgrove, he winds up, 'consarn your ugly pictur' come up an' see the family!"
"But the baby was asleep; an' Mart wandered around that boat as restless as a bed-bug fur

"Yes, you did! Not a minute ago!"
"That was only onc't."
"I reckon that was onc't too many."
"An' did the baby cry because I swore?"
"I couldn't you cry, if you was a little ting like dat!"
"Wal, says Mart, 'I won't swar no more, I'll be—'
"An' then he stopped; fur it was right on the end o' his tongue ag'in, he was so used to it.
"He went on:
"Hyar, give it this little piece o' terbacker. That'll stop it, maybe."
"Give a baby terbacker!" yells all the women-folks, at once, an' throwed up their hands, an' held their breath.
"Ain't that all right?" says Mart, lookin' a little scared.
"Oh! the horrid critter! they all yelled; an' the way they hustled Mart out o' that cabin was a caution."
Mart called his baby the Pride o' the St. Louis, an' the story went the length o' the river.
"The next trip his watch come in the day-time; an' he had a little bunk built jest for'ard o' the starboard-engine, where it could lay on warm days an' play with the sunshine, while he watched it, goin' about his work. When the baby was around Mart didn't swar; an' it softened him up a power in every way.
"Mart hadn't nobody else in all the wide world, as he often said; an' when that baby sickened an' died, not six months after he pulled her out o' the river, it seemed to take all the heart an' life out o' 'im. He had been as devil-may-care a galsot as run the river before. Now he was a different man, an' he never opened his head. When he wa'n't at work he sot an' studied an' studied. Dark nights, like this, he was always restless, an' kept lookin' out ahead as if he expected to see somethin' or other."
As if in answer to the engineer's words, a rude voice came from the cabin above, through the door at this moment opened by the traveler who had stood so long on the forward deck.
"You're a liar!—an' I kin mop the floor with ye till ye won't fetch two cents a pound fur soap-grease!"
(To be continued—commenced in No. 455.)

The Love a Woman Bears.

BY LUCILLE HOLLS.

"WELL," with a cynical intonation in the deep, low voice, and a half-smile flickering across the dark face of the speaker.
"Well? what?" said La Grange Chillingworth, his boyish, ringing tones and frank countenance in striking contrast to his companion's utter inscrutability.
"Nonsense! You were thinking of her at that moment. What is it that you think?"
The younger man's face was all aglow as he answered, with honest enthusiasm:
"That she is divine! The most perfect woman I know. I tell you, Bonnell, the man who wins that woman for his wife ought to feel himself the most fortunate of mortals."
"And why may not that man be you?" Bonnell asked, coldly.
"If I have not the slightest chance in the lists against a man by whom all the women are fascinated."

Good-by! I wish you all manner of happiness. Though that is all nonsense. It is your destiny to be happy, when I am out of your pathway; and, since we shall never meet again, the wish and the wisher will speedily be forgotten."
He was trying both his strength and his own. For he must have known how his words hurt her. When he held out his hand in parting the girl withheld hers, angrily. He accepted her decree, mutely, and turned away with a bow. Then, swiftly, almost involuntarily, Pearl retook her decision, held out one hand—held out both hands—was clasped in Paul's arms.
"Pearl! Pearl! I know you love me, child; but you must not! You must not! I am a man of the people, and poor!"
"What matters that? I am rich! Rich enough for us both," whispered Pearl, while his throbbing pulses, his clasping arms, his hot caress upon her face, seemed to proclaim that Bonnell loved her.
"What matters that? It matters this much—that it has separated us to all eternity. What am I that I dare aspire to the hand of Pearl Radcliffe, the heiress and last of a proud line?"
"You are Mrs. Chillingworth's guest."
"Because Mrs. Chillingworth's slip of a son chooses to like me and my society. What do they know of me that they should give to my keeping this jewel that they covet to exhibit as their own?"
"Paul, you talk so strangely I cannot follow you. But Mrs. Chillingworth is my chaperon, not my guardian. I have a right to bestow my love where I will."
"But not on me, child: I have not been guilty of seeking it. Of that wrong I can hold myself free; and now I must go away that you may forget me. Farewell—you will soon recover from the bitterness of that word!"
He unhooked his arms from about the slender form, and walked away without one backward glance. He had said that she would soon recover from the bitterness of that word, farewell. He knew that he never could. Ah, if he had but told that, too, to Pearl!
She went down to dinner that night without betraying one trace of what she had suffered, was suffering, save by a trifle of unwanted pallor; and the next day—the day after Paul Bonnell's departure from the seaside cottage—all of Mrs. Chillingworth's guests knew that La Grange Chillingworth was betrothed to the noble young heiress.
"Pearl!"
The book over which the lady was bending slipped from her lap. She grew pale and shivered. For a moment she could not control herself to meet the gaze she felt burning down upon her. But when she lifted her face, despite its cold hauteur, Paul Bonnell saw the change the months had wrought there—the weary, unsatisfied, bitter look which struggles with a love she could not conquer, but which she contemplated herself for possessing, had induced, and his heart bled for this girl.
"Poor child! My poor darling!"
It had not needed those words, that unutterably pitiful, tender tone, to melt Pearl's heart toward the man who stood before her. He, too, had changed since their parting. The black heavy masses of hair were lined thickly with gray. The pale dark face was worn and haggard.
"Why did you come back?" she cried, passionately.
"Because I am weaker than I deemed myself."

Alone Pearl Radcliffe had sought Leaside Park. Her card had been carried to its solitary, secluded mistress, with Paul Bonnell's message penciled upon it. The name proved talismanic. The pale, resolute-eyed visitor was shown to the door of Lady Dartley's apartment. With trembling nerves she entered through the dark doorway into a lofty room filled with gloomy old furniture and the presence of a woman whose youth and beauty were prematurely faded, and who wore a white garb as of a religious recluse. Beads and a crucifix hung at her side, and a slender golden chain and crucifix, identical with that worn by Paul Bonnell, was fastened about her throat.
"I am come to learn by what oath Paul Bonnell is at your mercy, and may not marry a woman he loves?"
For an instant Lady Dartley gazed with cold hatred into the questioner's eyes. Then she answered, slowly:
"So you are the woman Paul Bonnell loves! Ay! and he loves you, as he never did me! But you—bah! how long will you care for him when I tell you that he is a—murderer?"
Pearl shivered as a stray leaflet struck by a rude storm-blast.
"How is it that you alone can say this of him?" she forced herself to ask.
"Ha! I doubted if your love would stand that knowledge! And yet I, whom he fancied, briefly, and hates, now, have kept that secret from him, all these years, though it was my brother whom he murdered!"
"Kept it at the price of what oath?"
"That he shall never marry! Do you care to hear more, girl?"
"No! If there is more to tell, Paul shall be his own accuser."
"You will go to him—now?" The woman sprung up furious as an enraged animal. But Miss Radcliffe was beyond her power.
"Paul, my love, I have heard part. You shall tell me the rest. Speak, Paul!" The girl slipped upon her knees before the form sitting rigid upon the rustic seat of the little vine-gloomed temple; but the dark-lashed lids were not raised from the pallid cheeks; the compressed lips gave no sound.
"Paul! Paul! Hear me! It is Pearl. She loves you!"
Still no answer. The pleader tore aside the darkening vines, and let the sunlight fall across Paul's worn face, as she knew that however he had sinned, however he had suffered, the sin was expiated, the suffering ended.
The disturbed house of Chillingworth was more disturbed when a message from Lady Dartley commanded Miss Radcliffe to Leaside Park, before the confined-form of Paul Bonnell should be carried thence to a ferny grave in the shady yard of the castle chapel.
"La Grange, you must come, too," Pearl said, gravely.
In the somber drawing-room, closed, until now, since the death of Ralph Dartley, and the self-encasement of his sister—the last of the direct Dartley line—Paul Bonnell's body lay; and across it Elinor Dartley made her confession to Pearl Radcliffe.
"You cannot guess how I loved this man. I cared not that I was rich; that it was as if my rank and wealth were, mayhap, more to him than myself. We made our arrangements to elope. My brother, Ralph, discovered our plans, and intercepted us. Paul drew a pistol and fired. The ball missed me, and he seized the whip and urged the horse on with a plunge that threw our captor far to the side of the road. Paul would come back, then. Ralph was carried home—and died. He died—from the effects of the blow the horse's hoof upon his head. But before his death he had recovered consciousness long enough to make me take an oath not to marry Paul Bonnell. In expiation of what I had done, I vowed never to marry. But Paul—I resolved that I could not marry, neither should he! I told him that he was my brother's murderer. That the pistol-shot had caused Ralph's death, but that I had screened him, and would, if he would take an oath never to marry. The crucifix I put about his throat, and with it bound him to myself, and to the belief that he had taken my brother's life. But he was innocent. Here, over his dead body, I swear it! I have sought to expiate one wrong by a life of rigid harshness, seclusion, and penances; but for this I can atone! I can only free his name from the imputation with which I blackened it, and—die!"
Lady Dartley withdrew from the room, and in the five years longer of her miserable life—no human being, but her maid, saw the guilty woman. Mayhap, indeed, she expiated her sins. Who can tell?
Pearl bent above the pallid face—came now, in its icy slumbers—and pressed one caress upon the closed eyes.
"Paul, listen to me, darling! We are separated, but it is not for eternity! We are each other's, now—and for always, dear," she whispered.
"Come away, La Grange, and take this ring. Speak to me never again of this love marriage. I am his bride—made so through death."